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# THE STORY OF THE COUP D'ÉTAT

BY M. DE MAUPAS  
(FORMER MINISTER)

*FREELY TRANSLATED, WITH NOTES, BY*

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## PREFACE.

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OUR principal aim in the writing of this first part of our Memoirs\* was to trace back the events of the 2nd December; we wished to show the concatenation of circumstances that made it a necessity, to bring to light the consequences it produced.

Why did we call Memoirs what might more logically have been entitled the History of the 2nd December? A few words will suffice to explain.

In a work purely historical, the writer is bound to carefully stand outside the facts he exposes. And the part we took in those events of which we have to speak rendered a complete abstraction of our personality impossible. What we saw, did, and knew, had, in order to preserve its interest, to be presented at certain moments in the form peculiar to Memoirs. With our title we were more at liberty to describe and to give a series of details which a rigorously historical method would have compelled us to present in a less vivid form.

In entering as we did into the intimate details of this interesting period, which begins and ends with the Presidency of Louis Napoleon, we laid ourselves open perhaps to awaken once more

\* The title of the original work is "Mémoires sur le Second Empire," par M. de Maupas, Ancien Ministre.



certain susceptibilities, to rekindle the anger of many. And yet more than thirty years have passed since the events we are about to describe. At such a distance should not facts appear already in their true light? May not an impartial judgment of them be expected? It is because of this that we have not without some impatience, easily to be explained, waited until now to publish these Memoirs. We found another advantage in this adjournment. We were able to see the growth of a series of publications that by their calumnies scandalously outraged truth, and we were prompted by the examination of those libels to restore to their true proportions facts that had been completely perverted.

More, perhaps, was expected of us : the detailed rectification of all the falsehoods invented by our detractors. We might, in fact, have afforded ourselves this satisfaction ; but to what endless digressions would not such a method of refutation have led? Was it not jeopardizing one's dignity to condescend to the justification of a lot of improbable impostures? Another course was open to us, namely, to simply expose authentic facts, to write, with the documents before us, the true history of the Presidency of Louis Napoleon, and especially that of the 2nd December. It is to this latter course that we made up our minds.

We did, however, not debar ourselves from alluding as we went on, and as a kind of sample, to some of the enormities which it has pleased the pamphleteers in renown to invent ; but we made it a point to confine our rectifications to the exact limits prescribed by necessity.

Many friends counselled us to still postpone our

publication. While deferentially admitting the justice of some of their observations, two reasons decided us to wait no longer. Here is the first.

By the side of some enlightened minds, who have assuredly estimated, from the simple perusal, at their true worth the inventions of those who insulted us, there are credulous folk who often take for gospel, without the least distrust, anything and everything that the printing-press puts under their eyes. We have often had occasion to notice this, and it seemed to us a pity to let error prevail any longer.

The second consideration that prompted us to defer our publication no longer is equally important. We were bound to look for not only criticism—criticism is a right—but for attack and contradiction. We have our hands full of proofs, or, to speak by the card, we know where to lay hands on them; we did not wish to abdicate the strength they provide us with in case of need. We wished to reply and to show, if required, that our work is in no way a work of party.

To praise that which is worthy of praise can, in fact, not be called a work of party. If praise of the Prince's policy often emanates from our pen, it is because praise is frequently deserved. Facts will show this; every conscientious man, to whatever party he may belong, will be bound to admit them. By a coincidence, on which we gratulate ourselves from more than one point of view, the period of Louis Napoleon's power of which we speak in these pages is indisputably the one which will shed the greatest honour on his memory. In showing this, proof in hand, we simply performed an act of conscience. And if further proof were

needed to attest our sincerity, we should say to our readers: this proof will not fail to be forthcoming at our hands. We have, in fact, written on the last years of the Empire a work to be published shortly; it will be the second part of our Memoirs. Things have changed in this painful period. We will fatally be confronted with the errors of the Empire, and then we shall be able to show that we can, without weakness, allot to each his part of the responsibilities, and respond to the duties imposed upon the author. But there is no need to provide our own security, we fearlessly await from this day the judgment of the honest. They will say that we have written in good faith and without partiality.

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# THE STORY OF THE COUP D'ÉTAT.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE PRIMARY CAUSES OF OUR REVOLUTIONS.

The various phases of the Revolution in France—1830 and 1848.—Louis Napoleon elected representative of the people.—He declines the honour and is re-elected.—The first glimmerings of the Empire.

WHEN a nation wishes to break with her past, to abandon her traditional customs and her fundamental laws, in order to embark upon the road to reform, and thus to create for herself new institutions, assuredly such an enterprise is not the work of a day. A long travail of her great thinkers prepares the crisis; a supreme effort brings it to a head, a number of years are needed to regulate its effects. In fact, if we examine the lives of peoples, if we study the history of their social and political transformations, if we carefully follow the march of their civilisation, we observe how fraught with labour are those evolutions that lead to grandeur or decline.

France is passing through one of those formidable crises. We must go back to the latter years of the age of Louis XIV. to find the germs of the political and social movement that has caused so terrible a quaking in our unfortunate country. Under the Regency, and during the long years of Louis XV.'s reign, the malady gets worse; and the first glare of

that immense conflagration which from France spreads over a part of Europe becomes perceptible.

Under the reign of Louis XVI. the revolutionary idea appears with open vizard; it asserts and constitutes itself. The leaders of the movement no longer conspire only, they act. They negotiate with the powers that be, then they dictate their laws, until the day when, feeling themselves strong enough to deliver their last assault, they sap and overthrow the old monarchic fabric whence had issued centuries of grandeur and prosperity to France.

No concession, no submission, succeeded in abating the exactions, to stay the explosion. Louis XVI. made every effort with which a love of justice and patriotism could inspire a sovereign. He understood that the movement which shook France was not one of those that could be repressed; he had devoted himself to the search after useful reforms; he drew back at no sacrifice to arrive at what he deemed the interests of the country. If, like the King, the promoters of the Revolution had merely desired the triumph of good, the movement would have remained within pacific limits; it would have been fruitful of weal, instead of being prodigal of disaster; it would have opened a new era of prosperity, instead of accumulating sorrow and ruin.

Not those, however, who unchain popular passions are the masters to direct their course. The leaders of the Revolution were quickly overwhelmed by it, and one after another became its victims. The year 1793 was the culminating point of the crisis; and history, as she condemned the fatal date, bestowed upon it its veritable name—the Terror. The Terror once vanquished, the Revolution resumed its task. If it ceased to be sanguinary, it ceased not, and for long afterwards, to be disastrous; for so long, in fact, that at the present hour we are still writhing within the grip of the terrible evil, the

final aim of which remains a problem. The power of the revolutionary idea must have been deeply rooted indeed for the gigantic and glorious diversions of the Empire to have failed to prevent a resumption of its sway. The 18th Brumaire was the first revenge of order on anarchy, and the first return to reason. From amid the ruins the genius of Napoleon brought forth an entirely new world. Utopian visions, adventurous and subversive ideas, were put back. The acceptable claims of the Revolution, those that could, without commotion and in unison with royalty, have been introduced to our system of laws, took a legal shape. At the fall of the Empire, the brother of the unfortunate Louis XVI. himself admitted and developed, when he took the crown, what were termed the conquests of the Revolution; and under this able monarch France essayed the putting into practice of her new institutions.

But no nation can be worked up with impunity to a state of ferment such as the French had arrived at between 1789 and 1793. The advanced Liberals of 1815 were no longer satisfied with a power in which every interest was safeguarded, in which all the liberties compatible with order were proclaimed by the charter. The Revolution then assumed the character it has not abandoned since; one might say that it threw down the mask. Those who directed it, like those who followed in their wake, showed their true motives—the satisfaction of the appetites of the ambitious of all classes. It was, in fact, to scale the heights of power that some of these latter overthrew the throne in 1830; it was to wrest that power from them that in 1848 some others shattered the crown of Louis Philippe, to bring our unhappy country back once more to days of trial and suffering.

In the eyes of some, the Revolution of 1830 had only substituted one crown for another. Truth to tell, the soreness of defeat was only met with

among the upper classes. The people themselves were not affected, save in certain provinces particularly attached to the Bourbon family. The majority of the nation remained indifferent. Between the charter of 1814 and that of 1830 there were, as far as the people were concerned, no appreciable differences: to them it was a mere change of reign; it was not a disturbance of their habits. The fundamental laws of the State remained the same; there was a consciousness of being protected—nothing more was asked for. Dynastic faith was extinguished; the wish for peace, order, and security had replaced political opinions; the fears aroused by the first news of the triumphant revolution had been dispelled; the satisfaction of having escaped some perilous eventualities created almost everywhere a genuine outburst of joy.

Nevertheless, it should be said that the young generation had yielded to the unreasoning enthusiasm for liberty, and that its joy was sincere. The press had already worked its ravages. A breach had been made in the essential principles of our social life. The years 1789 and 1793 had left a heritage of hatred of the nobility and clergy; this hatred found its satisfaction in the events that had just been accomplished. One might say that 1830 was the triumph of evil over good.

In 1848 the shock was much more violent than it had been in 1830. Everything seemed threatened; the mere word Republic caused a profound alarm. The year 1793 was not sufficiently distant not to dread its return, even if an excessive want of skill had not caused the then rulers to seek in the arsenal of the stormy past for everything that could revive its memory. Everything in this exhibition inspired fear, even to the affectation, more ridiculous than dangerous, of resuscitating the obsolete vocabulary of 1793. To them it seemed the best means of republicanizing the country; it

only succeeded in alienating confidence. But they did not stop at words merely; they wanted to resume the Revolution at the point where the courageous initiative of the First Consul had compelled it to stop. The country was flooded with agents who spread fear everywhere, and the majority of whom preached the most subversive doctrines. Some deputies of the Left of the last Chamber, and some honest Republicans, had accepted this mission. Fortunate indeed were those departments where their saving action was exercised. But they were but the feeble exceptions: the majority of those improvised delegates hailed from some doubtful haunts; some were the Dead Sea fruit of the bar or of journalism, others the pillars of third-rate cafés and beershops, street-orators or former political offenders. Such men gave but a sorry idea of the power that had accredited them. The Provisional Government naturally wanted to inaugurate the Republic with the Republicans *de la veille* (of the vigil\*), to use an expression of the time. Those who had been in the struggle meant to have a part of the spoil; they had to be tolerated. Those men with sinister faces and vulgar habits, who could only threaten and be violent, treated their departments like conquered countries. Where would the Government stop with such auxiliaries? Such was the question every one asked of himself from one end of France to the other.

The Republic of 1848 had been a surprise rather than the triumph of the idea pursued by the promoters of the movement. The Chamber only wished to obtain one reform; the leaders of the Opposition only aspired to take the places of their antagonists. But the truth of what we stated already became manifest once more; it is not those who let loose the popular storm that can direct or arrest its current. The Left of the

\* At the same time a skit upon the old soldiers of Napoleon's army, who were called "*les vieux de la vieille*."—*Translator*.



Chamber, at the head of which were MM. Thiers, Odilon Barrot, Duvergier de Hauranne, and other parliamentary notabilities, was overwhelmed and treated as suspects and as an enemy. It was the first and just punishment of its own errors. In a few hours the trick had been accomplished in favour of the unscrupulous.

But just as the Monarchy represents and favours order and stability, so does the Republic carry with it a state of ferment and instability. Mutability is its very essence, the reason of its existence. On the plea of perfecting its institutions, the remodelling of them becomes continual; the changing of its most essential doctrines becomes a never-ceasing question, and the mutation of persons necessarily follows those transformations. Every ambition under this régime being necessarily on the alert; one crisis is scarcely ended before another begins. The leading dogma of the Republic is the dogma of agitation. The crisis of 1848 afforded numerous and successive examples of this truth. The insurrection had scarcely succeeded in Paris, thanks to this revolutionary engine of modern invention called the National Guards, when the National Guards themselves gave the signal for reaction. The famous manifestation termed of the "Bear-Skins"—a manifestation without arms and truly imposing—was a warning to the Provisional Government, a summons to return within the practices of a moderate programme. To the excitement of the first hour succeeded then a comparative moderation. M. de Lamartine had the courage to substitute the tricolor flag for the red one; but shortly afterwards the counter-movement took place. The days of June (1848), this immense outbreak of fratricidal war, showed France the perils to which she was exposed, the desperadoes with whom she had to deal, and the disorders the real Republicans meant to reduce her to. Then, after the victory of the army over the revolt, the reaction grasped

power once more ; it was indeed the picture of the Republic and its never-ending vicissitudes that was thus unfolded to the intent and terror-stricken gaze of the country.

We say nothing but what is strictly logical when we maintain that those revolutionaries by trade, those agitators by temperament and by education, thus proved themselves, against their will, the most useful promoters of the Empire—the men who unconsciously but efficaciously prepared the great day of reaction, the 2nd December. The further we proceed in this narrative, the more we shall become aware that the nomination of Prince Louis Napoleon to the Presidency, the 2nd December, and the Empire itself, are the results of the excesses of 1848 ; of the excitements and riots that were their natural consequences ; of the uneasiness and anguish that took possession of men's minds ; in short, of the troubles into which the Republic had thrown the country. Did not the facts themselves demonstrate this undeniable truth ? The world's law, like that of nations and of individuals, is not to resign one's self to an unhappy lot without making at least every possible effort to shake off its grasp. The cure of the disease is ardently sought for, the least ray of hope is fondly cherished and pursued as long as there is the faintest hope of making it a happy reality. France in her distress of 1848 eagerly sought the only means of deliverance which were still possible. The Republic, even rendered more human by the comparative prudence of General Cavaignac, offered her nothing but troublous horizons ; the majority of the nation wanted, at any cost, to separate themselves from this form of government, and they turned their glances everywhere in the endeavour to find a saviour.

The marked preference of the country was in favour of the monarchical idea. But which monarchy was possible ? Where was the prince with

sufficient devotion to accept a situation so big with peril, with sufficient popularity, sufficient strength and authority, to conquer the difficulties inseparable from a restoration?

The elder branch of the Bourbons was assailed throughout the land by a series of abominable slanders that had absolutely become part and parcel of the popular belief. To overthrow the Republic in favour of Legitimacy was an enterprise not to be realised. Hence salvation could not come from that side.

The Orleans family had just descended the throne. The anger that had pursued them was still too burning to make the return of one of their princes possible. However capable they might have been, it would have been a provocation. Only the forlorn hope of the party indulged this dream. But public opinion was not with them; and, seeing that a practical solution was aimed at, that the intention was to act for the benefit of the country, and not in the interest of an individual, or even of a dynasty, the idea of an Orleanist combination was with almost common accord dismissed.

It requires no great effort of the imagination to discover which other dynasty could give a sovereign to the country. The Napoleonic legend was still a living, breathing thing among the people. The splendour of the victories of the Empire had had sufficient power to efface the humiliation of its defeat; only the grand days of Rivoli, Marengo, Austerlitz, Jena, Friedland, and Wagram were on the people's lips. The actors in this grand *épos* still filled our rural districts, where they told their reminiscences; and the little ones of the new generations while learning to speak learned at the same time to admire and to glorify Napoleon. Every cottage boasted the portrait of the great man, the pictures of his battles, the popular episodes of his life. Their possession was at the same time the evidence of national pride, of laudable patriotism,

and the visible translation of a political preference; it was a profession of faith.

Given the existence of a man who by inheritance had the mission to resuscitate the Empire, that man was assured beforehand of an immense popular enthusiasm. That man existed; he was called Louis Napoleon Bonaparte; he was the nephew of Napoleon and the heir to his throne; he was but little past the prime of life, and could hold the reins of government himself. The day when the country, which up till now had had no interest in watching his career, recovered the memory of his existence, that day Louis Napoleon became the pointed-out saviour, the sovereign designated to deliver France from the whirlpool of anarchy.

And, in fact, what more significant evidence of the popular feeling could be found than the spontaneous manifestation of universal suffrage on the 6th June, 1848? Partial elections had been held in a number of departments; some hot partisans had brought forward the name of Louis Napoleon as a candidate for a seat in the Constituent Assembly. The one spark sufficed to produce the flame. Four departments, among which was that of the Seine, elected as their representative the nephew of Napoleon and the heir to his crown.

We need not stop at this first period of Louis Napoleon's elevation. It would be without interest to show in this place the umbrage taken by the Republicans at this mark of popular favour which came to seek him out, as it were—to insist upon the calumnies, the attacks and the persecutions that caused him to decline the trust of representative. We only wish to deduce from those facts the demonstration of such truths as this book will bring to light. Louis Napoleon was indeed the man of the nation; and the nation spontaneously proclaimed the fact. And when later on the popular will shall have placed into his hands the destinies of France, to those who would attempt

to deny the genuineness of the mission we would reply, "Consult the report of the elections of the 6th June." And we might add, "Refer to the election of the 17th September." On that day some fresh partial elections took place, and the heir to the imperial crown was once more elected, without his having, any more than on the first occasion, solicited the suffrages. But this time there were six departments that chose him as their representative. That day the evidence had to be accepted as conclusive. The country was going eagerly towards Louis Napoleon. The nation forced the resistance of the Prince, and in spite of the powers, in spite of the Chamber, she drew him from his exile, to signify, within the permitted limit, her wish to confide her destinies to him, and to recover her tranquillity under his authority. Hence we take this revelation at its origin; we shall watch its development; and when we have to speak of the 2nd December, it will be to present it in its true light—to show it as an act of submission to this same national will of which the 6th June and the 17th September, 1848, were the first and signal manifestations.

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE ELECTION OF THE 10TH DECEMBER.

The voting of the Constitution of 1848.—The candidates for the Presidency of the Republic.—General Cavaignac, MM. de Lamartine, Raspail, and Ledru-Rollin, Republican candidates. — General Changarnier, M. Thiers, Marshal Bugeaud, Prince Louis Napoleon, candidates of the Counter-Revolution.—The attitude and character of the Prince.—The leaders of the old dynastic parties rally round his candidature.—His manifesto to the French people.—Unsuccessful efforts of the Government to get General Cavaignac elected.—France on the 10th December.—Results of the elections.—Their consequences.

THE men of '48 would have willingly prolonged their sway; but the country felt tired of this Provisional Government, and although the election of a President of the Republic was but the confirmation of the Republican form itself, the nation regarded it as a way out of the blind alley in which she felt herself floundering. It was the possible opportunity for making known her preferences, for asserting her wishes. Hence the election was looked forward to with a genuine impatience. The Government and the Assembly could not pretend to ignore this pressure of opinion; they were therefore compelled to hurry the debates on the Constitution. The 4th November, 1848, this Constitution was voted, and the election of the President of the Republic was fixed for the 10th December following.

Long before the fixing of this date the electoral excitement had spread over the country. The Republican candidate had not to be looked for; it was General Cavaignac. He was already in possession of the public power; he had shown himself to be a man of worth and endowed with the capacities to govern; he had gained the respect of honest

people. A candidate like this increased the Republican chances, because he attracted many wavering Conservatives who saw no danger in trying the experiment of a republic, safeguarded by his authority. But the Mountain\* could not forget the firmness he had shown in the suppression of the June revolt; they could not accept "their executioner," as they styled him. They resolved to carry their votes upon another candidate—without, however, expecting aught else from this attempt than a mere census of their own adherents.

Some partisans of M. de Lamartine had, indeed, endeavoured to bring his name forward. But the illustrious poet was "a fallen grandeur;" he was not sufficiently advanced to command the whole of the suffrages of the intransigents. In February he had caused the red flag—the symbol of the fanatical republicans—to be removed; he personified the comparatively moderate shade in the Provisional Government; he was a Girondin, and the extreme party wanted at least a Jacobin for their ensign. The idea of M. de Lamartine's candidature was dismissed.

Old Raspail would have been the favourite candidate of the Mountain. The record of his services as a conspirator and a revolutionary left nothing to desire. It is true he had been educated as a priest; from a scholar at the seminary at Carpentras he had become a teacher; but this error of his youth had been largely condoned by the pledges which in a riper age he had given to democracy. A hero of the Revolution of July, afterwards condemned for political offences, he had under the Government of 1830 suffered a long term of imprisonment. The first to arrive at the Hôtel de Ville in 1848, he had been the first also to proclaim the Republic. Finally, Paris had elected him as one of her representatives in September, 1848.

\* The section of the most resolute and fanatical democrats.—*Translator.*

Assuredly this was respectable ballast enough, even for the Republicans *de la veille*; accordingly, he was their favourite.

But if M. de Lamartine was found to be too pale, Raspail was found to be too highly coloured, and with his reputation an ignominious defeat was an almost foregone conclusion. Then was started the candidature of Ledru-Rollin. In the Government of February Ledru-Rollin had represented the advanced party; he had always shown himself the talented champion of democracy. His name was not so great a stumbling-block as that of Raspail; it emphasized more than that of M. de Lamartine the Republican preference; hence Ledru-Rollin became the candidate of the Mountain.

The Conservative party was likewise unable to make up its mind. The name that seemed to embody the popular preference was undoubtedly that of Louis Napoleon; but the name provoked a somewhat lively repugnance among the *bourgeoisie* in general and that of Paris in particular, not to mention the political world. With many his past evoked some serious apprehensions; others felt that the future under his guidance might disappoint their fondest hopes. Nevertheless, each day brought more and more to light the fact that around the name of Louis Napoleon the largest battalions of universal suffrage were grouped.

The politic-mongers who felt a persistent repugnance to accept the candidature of Louis Napoleon continued to gauge public opinion with the hope to communicate this repugnance first, to convert it to their own choice afterwards. The name of General Changarnier was the first to be put forward. He had greatly distinguished himself in the African campaigns. He was the commander-in-chief of the Paris National Guard, and the title was a passport to the sympathy and confidence of the *bourgeoisie*. But what were the opinions of General Changarnier? It was known that he was

not a Republican ; was he then a Legitimist or an Orleanist ? No one was able to predict ; he had carefully abstained from expressing a preference. Belonging to no party, having no antecedents, nor being made of the stuff out of which the man of ideas is cut, he failed to start a current of opinion upon his personality. His candidature was dismissed.

General Changarnier being put aside, M. Thiers was thought of—or rather M. Thiers made himself thought of. His name was already famous. He had occupied a seat in several of the councils of Louis Philippe ; his speeches and his books had made a great noise ; he was incontestably one of the foremost political men of that period. What his name most apparently represented, though, was the revolutionary idea. The recollection of his grand feats of 1830 and 1848 was scarcely effaced by his acts of recent and too short-lived repentance. To take to extinguish a fire the very man who had kindled the flames was assuredly a contradiction that would arouse a great deal of resistance ; it was a kind of subtlety that would scarcely be relished by the electoral masses. The candidature of M. Thiers was abandoned, as that of General Changarnier had been.

Up till now we have purposely omitted to rank Marshal Bugeaud amongst the number of candidates of the Conservative party. He was the first to be solicited, but his sound sense had long beforehand determined the chances of the election. He declined all candidatureship and declared himself ready to support Louis Napoleon. Hence Marshal Bugeaud was at no moment of the contest a candidate for the Presidency.

It was misjudging the conditions of the forthcoming election to imagine that it could be influenced in a decisive manner by the means ordinarily employed—such as committees, local influences, or even the press itself, however powerful it might have become. The election of the Chief of the State

could only be the result of a political current. And such currents only make themselves felt under exceptional circumstances. Only powerful sentiments and considerations of supreme interest can produce them; neither the tactics of party nor their efforts are capable of calling them forth. A current is the sprouting of the same sentiment spontaneously felt by a whole nation, a sentiment which simultaneously takes hold of individualities and takes them one by one to make them into a bundle. A powerful idea, an important fact, an immense disaster, a brilliant success, glory above all, may, in a generous nation, determine a current. In a country like France, where the imagination and enthusiasm often take the place of reason, a current may very quickly supervene, and supervene for the benefit of evil as easily as for good. If this current really exists it defies everything: no power stops it. This truth, which our modern commotions have transformed into an axiom, was wilfully ignored by the leaders of the old parties when they took General Changarnier and M. Thiers by the hand. All the tactics, all the intrigue combined for the profit of one of them only, could only result in a deplorable defeat. Neither one nor the other had in their lives accomplished such feats as constitute titles to glory. Neither one nor the other symbolized an idea easily perceptible to the nation at large. No current could establish itself on either of those names. This favour was reserved to Louis Napoleon only. The origin of his dynasty was glory, his own most apparent significance the restoration of a monarchical régime—the return of the Empire. The hope he embodied was resumed in one word—deliverance.

But what of the objections the Legitimists and Orleanists might raise to such a candidature? They did not deem it prudent or possible to engage upon the struggle for their own direct benefit; what they wanted was to prevent the consolidation of the Republic and at the same time to reserve the future to



themselves. Hence it was, avoiding the election of General Cavaignac, to find a candidate who, according to public opinion, had sufficient power to contend with advantage with him. Doubt was no longer possible: the Prince was the candidate *par excellence*. But was not the future which those monarchists dreamed compromised with him?

If the name of Napoleon was a power, it was at the same time a peril: what would the future bring forth at the hands of the Prince if he became Chief of the State? If those same monarchists wanted the overthrow of General Cavaignac, and that of the Republic with his, they would by no means serve as stepping-stones to a President who might found a dynastic race; to a pretender who might by his merits, his abilities, and the authority he would take over the country, substitute a crown one day for his temporary power.

Through his origin and his aspirations Napoleon was no doubt a pretender; but did a careful examination of his situation as a whole really confirm the apprehensions his name might awaken? Would the country see the material of a sovereign in him? Had the Prince the qualities requisite to the conquest of the supreme rank? Would the power in his hands become a condition of strength and a lever favourable to his designs? Or would he be an ignominious failure perhaps, who would prove the very ruin of those ambitions by which he was supposed to be moved? Those were the questions the leaders of the various parties asked themselves. The prevailing impression which M. Thiers contributed to render acceptable was this: the Prince is an honest man, inclined to make himself illusions much nearer dreamland than reality. Brought up in exile, a stranger to the habits and temper of the country, he has none of the qualities necessary to wield authority. He is ignorant of the science of government; hence he will be obliged to defer to the experience of those who do



know. He seems amenable to advice, and therefore may be easily influenced. To resume: he seems made to submit rather than to resist. One may make a tool of him; there is no fear of his getting the upper hand.

Whether the Prince wished it or not, whether it was on his part calculation, or simply the result of his temperament left to its own devices, certain is it that his intercourse with the political men of the time confirmed rather than dispelled the illusions they had made themselves with regard to him. His ways were exceedingly modest, almost amounting to shyness. Most often he preferred to listen, and always with an encouraging smile. The melancholy expression of his face justified the supposition of his political ingenuousness, of indifference rather than resolve. He appeared to learn from the commerce of others; in reality he observed and initiated himself to a part in which everything was new to him. If a Nestor of the old parties attempted to assume an air of patronage or superiority, he appeared not to notice it. He only saw what he wished to see; he did not submit, he simply eluded. The attempt to gauge his feelings, to ascertain his views upon a piece of given advice or proffered opinion, was met by absolute silence, if he so willed it; to insist was merely to elicit an amiable commonplace instead of a pertinent answer. But his gentleness and kindness forbade all such persistency. Not but what, when he thought fit, he could resume his position of prince, of the son of a king and the heir to a great throne; but it was done without an effort that could be detected by the most practised eye. His nature served him marvellously in such instances; for if necessary, he could magnify himself without being suspected of the least attempt at haughtiness. The deference he showed to the prominent men with whom he came in contact made each of them believe that he was on the Prince's part an object of personal pre-

ference. This was truly the impression brought away from their interviews with Louis Napoleon by the notables of the day—MM. Thiers, Molé, Changarnier, being the first among them. They left the Prince with the belief of having made a decided impression on his mind, and of having won his friendship and his confidence. In their subsequent intercourse with him this was at once the cause of their weakness and the reason of his strength.

With the most presumptuous of this political Pleiad the Prince was for a long while a man of little consequence. To those who observed more closely he remained an enigma. Few persons, indeed, would dare to pretend that from the beginning they penetrated this impenetrable nature; even many of those who later on lived within his immediate presence only succeeded in forming an incomplete estimate of him. Time, greatness, the considerable movement of which the Prince when Emperor became the centre, modified to no appreciable degree either his first demeanour or his character itself. His education, already a solid one, was completed by the observance of men and things; the manifestations of his mind took a character of loftiness that became genuine eloquence; his proclamations, his speeches from the throne, always his personal work, showed in him the deep thinker and the philosophical statesman. His imagination suffered nothing from the effects of age; it remained his principal stumbling-block; it is to the too exclusive sway of this faculty, to the exaggerated worship of those inspirations that emanated from it, that must be attributed the greatest errors of his reign. He ever preserved his dislike of advice and control; and if, notwithstanding his instinctive tendency to resist domination, he ended by yielding to some of the most pernicious of all, the fact must be ascribed to the exceeding cleverness of those who gained the ascendancy, or, to

speaking correctly, to the unscrupulous use of those means which too often prove infallible near the throne—adulation and praise.

Whether as President or Emperor, Louis Napoleon never departed from his gentleness, kindness, and, above all, generousness, the latter of which remained the salient trait of his character. Neither did he rid himself of his indifference; and the obstinacy often met with in him never became, to speak truly, this real firmness with which it has pleased the world to credit him. We shall see later on that if those lofty qualities were not habitual to his mind, he could command them on solemn occasions. In grave contingencies one could but admire his steadfastness and complete possession of self. The hour of supreme danger, when confronted with death, found him impassive and brave to the verge of disdain. History will not place this figure in the ordinary ranks. If she be severe with regard to some of the acts—which we will not forestall—of the Prince whom we shall see become the Emperor Napoleon III., she will assuredly not refuse her homage to the grand sides of his character. She will take into account the times, the tangled difficulties amidst which Louis Napoleon began, continued, and ended his reign; and she will not be able to gainsay the undeniable truth that from 1849 to 1870 France enjoyed through him twenty years of prosperity.

One is bound to praise the clear-sightedness of those who were able to perceive this happy horizon amidst the darkness of this troubled epoch of 1848. It was the presentiment of this perspective that rallied round the candidature of the Prince all the honest men who placed the love of country, the determination to save it, above the interest of party. Various calculations, considerations of all kinds, but above all the impulse that revealed itself throughout the land, soon ended by placing the name of Louis Napoleon beyond all possible

discussion. The leaders of the old monarchical parties understood this; and to avoid being dragged in the wake of this immense movement of opinion, they graciously resolved to claim its direction, and openly placed themselves at its head. The election of the Prince would have been just as certain without them, for the masses applauded his very name; but it would be ungrateful not to acknowledge that the support of the monarchist leaders contributed to the increase of the majority. As the election drew near they showed themselves more and more assiduous with the Prince—MM. Berryer, Molé, and Thiers especially. The moment was come for Louis Napoleon to address himself to the nation. A manifesto was necessary to fix the exact conditions under which his candidature should be put forward. From that day date the first clouds between Louis Napoleon and the leaders of the majority in the Assembly. Without being sufficiently guarded, perhaps, they had applied themselves to suggest to the Prince first the language he should hold to the nation, then from advice in general it had come to the formulating of terms in particular. In this group of high notabilities, each one deemed himself authorized to hand the Prince a draft of a manifesto. The Prince accepted those communications with a kindly smile, which obviated words that could be used against him. This silence of Louis Napoleon did not fail to awaken certain apprehensions in the minds of his new counsellors. The moment for the publication of the manifesto drew near. At last came the day when Louis Napoleon convoked those men, illustrious in their various ways, who for some time had grouped themselves around him. Among them were MM. Thiers, Barrot, Berryer, and Molé.

Numerically small as was this meeting, the importance of the questions to be discussed lent it a character of solemnity. Every one was anxious to

hear the reading of the document by the Prince. But its very first words must have been a disappointment to those who had given themselves the trouble to elaborate a draft of a manifesto. Long before the advice they had so lavishly tendered, the Prince's manifesto had been ready. It was his exclusive personal performance. It resumed his ideas and his tendencies, it asserted his will; and we shall see that by the loftiness of its language it already gave the measure of his worth both as a politician and a writer.

The manifesto was worded as follows:—

“LOUIS NAPOLEON TO HIS FELLOW CITIZENS.

“In order to recall me from exile you have named me representative of the people; on the eve of electing a Chief Magistrate of the Republic my name presents itself to you as a symbol of order and security.

“Those proofs of so honourable a confidence are, I am well aware, addressed to my name rather than to myself, who, as yet, have done nothing for my country; but the more the memory of the Emperor protects me and inspires your suffrages, the more I feel compelled to acquaint you with my sentiments and principles. There must be no equivocation between us.

“I am moved by no ambition which dreams one day of the Empire and war, the next of the application of subversive theories. Brought up in free countries, schooled in the school of misfortune, I shall ever remain faithful to the duties which your suffrages and the will of the Assembly impose upon me.

“If elected President, I shall shrink from no danger, from no sacrifice to defend society, so audaciously assailed. I shall devote myself wholly, without afterthought, to the consolidation of a Republic prudent through its laws, honest by its aims, great and strong from its deeds. My



greatest honour would be to hand, after four years of office, to my successor the public power consolidated, its liberties intact, and a genuine progress accomplished.

“Whatsoever the result of the election, I shall submit to the will of the nation. My support is assured beforehand to any just and strong Government which shall bring back order to the public mind as well as to public affairs; which shall efficaciously protect religion, family institutions, and the interests of property—the three eternal bases of the social state; which shall invite all possible reform, appease hatreds, reconcile party feeling, and thus permit our anxious fatherland to look forward to a morrow.

“To bring back order is to re-establish confidence; to provide by credit for the temporary insufficiency of our resources is to restore financial prosperity.

“To protect religion and the family institutions is to guarantee liberty of worship and liberty of education.

“To protect property is to maintain inviolable the product of all labour; it is to guarantee the independence and security of ownership, the indispensable foundations of civil liberty.

“With regard to possible reforms, the following appear to me to be the most urgent.

“To admit all retrenchment which, without disturbing the efficiency of public administration, will allow of the remission of the most burthensome taxes on the nation; to encourage all such enterprises which by the development of the resources of agriculture may in France and in Algeria provide labour to those who lack it; to provide for the old age of the working classes by provident institutions; to introduce into our industrial laws such improvements as may tend, not to ruin the rich for the benefit of the poor, but to found the welfare of each on the prosperity of all.

“To confine within just limits the number of



situations in the gift of the State, and which often transforms a free people into a nation of petitioners; to avoid the disastrous tendency which impels the State to undertake to do herself what private enterprise would do as well, if not better. Centralisation of interests and enterprise is in the nature of despotism. The nature of the Republic rejects monopoly.

“Finally, to preserve the liberty of the press from the two excesses which most often compromise it, arbitrariness and its own licence.

“With war there would be no hope of alleviating our maladies; peace must therefore be the fondest of our desires. France during her first Revolution was aggressive because she was compelled to it. Invasion was replied to by conquest. To-day, when no one provokes her, she can devote her resources to pacific improvements, without renouncing a firm and loyal policy. A great nation should keep silent, or never speak in vain.

“Concern for the national honour means concern for the army, the patriotism of which has so often been overlooked. We must, while maintaining the fundamental laws which are the strength of our military organisation, lighten and not aggravate the burden of the conscription. We must take care of the present and of the future—not only of the officer, but also of the non-commissioned officer and the soldier, and provide an assured existence for those who have served long and faithfully with the colours.

“The Republic should be generous and have faith in its future; therefore I, who have known captivity and exile, I eagerly look forward to the day when the fatherland shall be able without danger to put a stop to all proscription, and to efface the last traces of our civil discords.

“Those, dear fellow-citizens, are the ideas I shall bring to the exercise of power, if you call me to the Presidency of the Republic.

"The task is a difficult one, I know; but I do not despair to accomplish it, by calling to my aid, without distinction of party, the men whose high intelligence and probity have already pointed them out to public opinion.

"Besides, when one has the honour to be at the head of the French nation, there is an infallible means of doing that which is right: it is to will it.

"LOUIS NAPOLEON BONAPARTE."

The reading of the manifesto had been listened to with a religious silence; it had aroused a genuine surprise, and disclosed some wholly new horizons. The Prince was indeed a man, a profound thinker, an able politician—there could be no doubt of it any longer; and the illusions of M. Thiers had taken flight one by one at every word he had heard.

Deeply convinced as was Louis Napoleon of the value of his doctrines, of the excellence of his language, he was the first to invite discussion. He went, as it were, to meet criticism and suggestion, with the firm intention to profit by them if he judged them well-founded. The matter of the address only elicited some short observations, and they partook of the nature of reservation rather than of criticism. Its style was unanimously approved. "A few words," it was timidly suggested, "might with advantage be replaced by others." They were deferentially pointed out. The Prince defended his expressions, courteously but with firmness; he explained their sense and import; and the objectors ended by agreeing with him.

One word, however, had greater honours of discussion bestowed upon it than it deserved. It was the word "besides," the first of the last paragraph. His hearers advised the Prince to suppress the word "Besides," which was considered useless, while it was condemned as

ungrammatical. But the Prince stuck to his word; he explained its opportuneness; and finally he folded up his manifesto, as a hint that the discussion was at an end. The conventional congratulations, and a few words on general matters, concluded the meeting. The next morning the manifesto was placarded on every wall of Paris. It was the self-same one Louis Napoleon had read the day before, and the word "Besides" had kept its place.\*

We shall meet with little contradiction from those who can carry back their recollections to the period alluded to, when we say that the appeal of the Prince to the nation produced a favourable effect. It accelerated the course of this irresistible current that carried the Prince to power.

The 10th December the French nation proceeded to the urns. It was not an election, it was an immense acclamation of Louis Napoleon. And still the army of public functionaries were at their posts; they stood the onslaught with dauntless courage. Prefects, sub-prefects, agents of all sorts, showed the most ardent zeal. Both verbal and written instructions were multiplied. It was the display of the tactics of official candidature in all its rigour in favour of General Cavaignac. The Assembly itself shared in this movement; the majority of its members launched upon a most active propaganda in the provinces. They vied with one another in singing the praises of the Chief of the Executive; and, truth to tell, it was an easy task, for he was worthy of them. But we have already said that a struggle becomes impossible against a current of opinion. The current was with Louis Napoleon. Whole communes marched to the polls, headed by flags and drums, to the cries of "Vive Napoléon!"

\* All the details of the meeting described above are rigorously exact; they were given us, many years ago already, by one of the personages who was present at the meeting.

and "Vive l'Empereur." Fireworks had been prepared in view of the certain success.

The result of the voting was as follows :—

Votes polled . . . . .	7,317,344
Louis Napoleon . . . . .	5,434,226
General Cavaignac . . . . .	1,448,107
Ledru-Rollin . . . . .	370,119
Raspail . . . . .	36,920
General Changarnier . . . . .	4,790
Lost votes . . . . .	12,600

The result caused a profound impression both in France and throughout Europe. The figures and the conditions of the contest were the subjects of the most natural comment. France was offering the spectacle of an imposing and conclusive manifestation. Confronted with a Government that wanted to impose upon the country both the republican form and the election as Chief of the Republic of him who was already at its head, the nation, proud of its rights, arose almost like one man, and, boldly shaking off the bonds with which it was sought to fetter her, she rejected the candidate whose name implied the confirmation of the Republic, and preferred to him a Prince, the hereditary chief of a French dynasty, to emphasize her tendencies more energetically, as it were. To perceive the whole monarchical significance of this vote one should remember that this election had not been engaged in as a question of persons, but had been exclusively put forth as a test of principles. Nor should it be forgotten who was General Cavaignac, the then head of the Executive, the candidate for the Presidency of the Republic rejected by the vote of the 10th December. Besides having in his favour all the influence of the possession of authority, he, as it were, compelled the confidence of the country by his prudence and his honour, by his lofty probity, and by the pledges he had given to the party of order in those terrible June days. The Prince who was preferred to him was unknown to the country. If he had in his

favour the legendary memory of the founder of his house, he had at the same time against him the hazardous attempts of Strasburg and Boulogne. Therefore, what the country really wanted on this 10th December, when she raised Prince Louis Napoleon to power, was to condemn the Republic, a year's experience of which had already sufficed to show its dangers, and to assert by an ingenious device, within the measure of her rights, her desire for a monarchical restoration.

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## CHAPTER III.

### THE EARLY TIMES OF THE PRESIDENCY.

Formation of the Ministry of the 20th December.—M. Odilon Barrot and the new Ministers.—A glance at the Chamber.—The events of the 29th January, their causes and their warnings.—The Râteau proposal for the dissolution of the Chamber.—Attitude of the Army and the Population towards the Prince.—Aspect of the Elysée.—Assiduities of General Changarnier.—Letter to General Oudinot.—M. Léon Faucher's Message to the Prefects.—Fall of the Home Minister.—The Constituent Assembly dissolves.

THE deep impression produced throughout the whole of France by the election of the 10th December might have led one to believe for a moment in the final pacification of the country. There was some appeasement no doubt, but it was by no means real stability. Between those parties who wanted, as the last word of the Revolution, the triumph of their cause, there was not peace, but merely a truce.

During the early days of the Presidency every one, in fact, seemed determined to avoid irritating subjects. General Cavaignac—save in one instance, to be regretted for his own dignity—nobly supported his defeat, and for some time his most devoted

friends imitated his reserve.\* No serious obstacle seemed to present itself to the new President of the Republic.

The first important act to be accomplished by Louis Napoleon after his accession to power was the formation of his Ministry. From the moment that the first known results of the poll of the 10th December had foreshown the final upshot, negotiations to that effect had been started. They were pursued with different views. The Prince had his own combinations; the leaders of the old parties had theirs. The Prince gracefully yielded to circumstances, and consented to take some of his Ministers from among the men of the past; but he wished the majority of the Cabinet to be sympathetic with his cause and to accept his ideas of government.

The politicians by profession, on the contrary, only dreamt of profiting by what they deluded themselves into believing their own victory; they sought to establish near the Prince a council of *surveillance*, rather than a council of Ministers. This first Cabinet was by no means easy of formation. The leaders of the old parties, and especially the Orleanists, notwithstanding the important part they had played in the Constituent Assembly, not-

\* The incident to which we allude is this. The day that Louis Napoleon took the oath as President of the Republic in the Chamber, he went straight from the tribune towards General Cavaignac and offered him his hand, which the General refused. The majority of the Assembly was as painfully impressed by this want of courtesy as they admired the Prince for his graceful demeanour towards the vanquished opponent of the 10th December.

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A pendant to the above picture. The year that the Prince Imperial presided at the distribution of prizes at the general competition at the Sorbonne, Godelroi Cavaignac, the son of the General, and at present one of the most distinguished members of the Lower Chamber, had a prize for Latin poetry. The son of the vanquished refused to accept his reward at the hands of the son of the victor. The ardent youth of the Sorbonne gave an ovation to the heir of the proscribed hero of the 2nd December. The Court was at Fontainebleau when the news of what had happened at the Sorbonne arrived. The Empress became hysterical, and was obliged to leave the reception-rooms.—*Translator.*



withstanding the authority they had acquired in it, had not succeeded in obliterating their share in the Government that had just been overthrown. Hence their call to public power would have been considered inopportune. The wisest course, therefore, was to provide them with under-studies,\* by selecting some new men as their adjuncts, and to seek to place at their head an important name not too compromised by its past.

The Prince was rather happily inspired when he addressed himself to M. Odilon Barrot to confide him this trust. In 1848 M. Odilon Barrot had remained at an equal distance from the Government of July, which he had not been able to save after he had prepared its fall, and from the Revolution of which he had been one of the unconscious promoters. Liberal, and in advance of his time, he might succeed in not arousing apprehension among the moderate Republicans of the Chamber. The old parties, holding his name in respect, accepted it with favour. He was a good debater besides, and might efficiently support the policy which the Prince was about to inaugurate. His appearance carried authority with it, he carried sufficient political ballast; the choice was almost a matter of course. The Prince and his kindred had had with the family of M. Barrot and with himself some anterior relations. M. Odilon Barrot was to have defended Louis Napoleon in the Strasburg trials; and his brother, M. Ferdinand Barrot, had been one of the three advocates of the Pretender in the Boulogne trials before the Court of Peers. The Prince liked M. Odilon Barrot, and accorded him such a measure of confidence as he was capable of

\* The term is a purely theatrical one, and as such the author intended it. In many of the Paris theatres a rôle is often given to a principal actor because it comes within "his line of business," though he may not be fit for the character. In such cases a new man is selected to "under-study" him, in view of a contingency, which seldom fails to occur. The great actor throws up the part, and the *débutant* takes his place.—*Translator*.

giving. M. Odilon Barrot succeeded in forming a Cabinet, which was accepted by public opinion and which offended no susceptibilities in the Assembly. The Cabinet was composed as follows :—

MM. ODILON BARROT, Minister of Justice and President of the Council in the absence of the Prince.

DROUYN DE LHUYS, Foreign Affairs.

DE FALLOUX, Public Instruction and Worship.

DE MALLEVILLE, Interior.

BIXIO, Agriculture and Commerce.

LÉON FAUCHER, Public Works.

General RUHLIÈRE, War.

DE TRACY, Marine.

PASSY, Finances.

All the moderate shades of the Assembly were represented in this Ministry. But within a few days of its formation, and in consequence of an incident of slight importance, it underwent a modification. M. Léon Faucher was appointed to the Interior, M. Lacrosse to Public Works, and M. Buffet to Commerce. But this change of persons involved no change of policy, which remained one of waiting and conciliation. The election of the 10th December necessarily produced certain modifications in the minds of the members of the Assembly. The success of Louis Napoleon had, in fact, rallied to his cause many well-intentioned men, who, while they had considered the choice of General Changarnier preferable to any other, perceived the possibility of the welfare of the country with Louis Napoleon, and graciously accepted the verdict of the nation. To those were added the ambitious of the new generation who hailed the rising sun, and, we may say, the majority of the moderate men of the various Conservative shades. Those different elements did not, however, form a compact majority in the Assembly. The Prince could only command a majority on

questions that presented a marked interest to the cause of order. To desert the Government on such grounds would have exposed this majority to the censure of public opinion. Outside those major causes the Chamber made the Prince feel its determination not to yield to his will. Sometimes it went beyond this, and assumed a distinct attitude of hostility towards him.

An incident threatened one day to compromise this very doubtful understanding. The Mobile Guard, created in a troublous moment as a revolutionary expedient, was fast becoming a danger to public security. The Government had decided upon disbanding this altogether transitory anomaly, and the project had been laid before the Assembly. The measure naturally caused a great deal of excitement among this young militia; certain agitators had not scrupled to discount their angry feelings, and it was evident that complications would arise.

And, in fact, the reports that reached the Prefecture of Police became very alarming. During the night the secret societies had not suspended their sittings; the leaders had scoured the faubourgs; proclamations had been prepared to call the restless population of Paris to arms. An organized resistance was being prepared. Warned in time, the Government had taken energetic measures. General Changarnier kept some imposing forces in readiness. The insurrection was defeated beforehand; their leaders had sense enough to understand it. Discretion proved the better part of valour; the projected uprising was adjourned till a more favourable opportunity.

If this so-called day of the 29th January had demonstrated to what extent insurrectionary organisation was still alive, it had been also the occasion for a veritable ovation to the Prince. While reviewing the troops concentrated in the vicinity of the Place de la Concorde and the Tuileries, he had been received with the most enthusiastic cheers

by the army and the people. Such a cordial reception, joined to certain rumours of a *Coup d'État*, had caused great uneasiness in the Chamber, which for a moment felt its security threatened. Some misunderstandings with General Changarnier still further increased its suspicions, and it assumed an attitude which foreshadowed a conflict. Happily, the Ministry had a certain prestige with the representatives. It was known that it would not lend itself to a *Coup d'État*. Its assurances were accepted with confidence, and the storm was averted. But the preoccupations which had swayed the Chamber left their traces nevertheless; henceforth betwixt the Prince and Parliament one could only expect a kind of tacit understanding; a cordial sympathy was beyond hope.

Nevertheless, how very desirable was this sympathy between the great powers of the State. The 29th January had sufficiently shown that the insurgents of June, 1848, clung to their hopes and to their organisation. The Minister of the Interior had put his hand upon a widespread plot which, under cover of a society called "*La Solidarité Républicaine*," extended its ramifications throughout the whole of France. The future appeared once more in the most sombre colours. Public opinion did not underrate those perils, and saw not without anxiety the growing antagonism between the Prince and the Assembly. It was easy to foresee from the impressions that prevailed, that the time was near at hand when the country would loudly proclaim her preferences, and take sides against the expiring Assembly with the Chief of the State she had just elected.

The Assembly, elected with constituent powers, had accomplished its task: it had framed and promulgated a new Constitution; it had evidently reached the term of its mission. The question of its dissolution was discussed in high political regions; the country was not slow to seize the hint

offered her, and to show the Chamber her ill-will. In a few days a movement sprang up on this question of dissolution. From all parts of the country the Chamber was summoned to dissolve. The petitions grew apace. Councils-General, Municipal Councils clamoured equally loud; and the current assumed a character so intense and unanimous that the motion to dissolve the Chamber followed very quickly. It was M. Rateau who took the opportune initiative; and, after some hesitation, the Chamber decided to fix the 13th May for the expiration of its mission.

The Prince perceived without regret the attitude, guarded at first, then hostile, of the majority; he felt that this resistance to the preference thus clearly manifested by the participants of universal suffrage could only increase his popularity, the existence of which he had already had many opportunities of proving. At his first review of the Army of Paris the cries of "Vive Napoléon!" and "Vive l'Empereur!" had greeted him on his passage; the population and the army thus mingled their eager welcome. The few cries of "Vive la République!" were immediately drowned by an increase of enthusiasm on the other side. It was evident that the Prince-President had might on his side. A few days had enabled him to command the situation. Not that he had made an effort in that direction, or performed one single act or shown any unexpected capacities. It was merely the steady progress of events, the natural sequel to the same movement that had produced the "Tenth December." The nation wanted a Chief, she had found him; she wanted order, the Prince was its guarantee; she wanted to get rid of the Republic, and she saw in Louis Napoleon the personification of a monarchical régime. Never was a situation more clearly defined and more clearly understood; never was a will more clearly formulated by the immense majority of the country.



If the Assembly withheld its support, the most important men did not grudge their co-operation. Whatever the sentiment that animated them, they were most assiduous in their attendance at the Elysée. M. Molé, M. Thiers, M. Berryer, General Changarnier had frequent and long interviews with the Prince. The upper world of politics crowded the drawing-rooms of the Chief of the State. The Republican element had, as it were, rendered themselves justice by gradually withdrawing from the receptions of the Prince. They were replaced by the great names of the Faubourg St. Germain, who since 1830 had held aloof from the Government, and who felt a certain satisfaction, mixed with curiosity, to re-enter the precincts of power. Besides, the Elysée was as yet neutral ground; one might be seen on it without effacing one shred of one's colours. Thanks to this mixture of notable individualities from all parties and all sources—from the diplomatic and financial worlds, from the army and the clergy, from the magistracy and the great bodies of the State—the Republican perfume evaporated altogether.

The aspect of the Elysée was that of a Court, and the Prince in his turn naturally assumed the demeanour of a sovereign. It was felt that he was destined to become one within a short delay, and he was unconsciously treated with the respectful deference reserved for crowned heads. Assuredly the Prince had within himself the requisite qualities to worthily occupy the foremost rank. He was born on the steps of a throne, his early education had been influenced by his august origin. The chances of an election which raised him to the summit of power only placed him in a position analogous to that which his birth had mapped out for him. And besides, if to ordinary natures, a sudden and startling elevation often proves a great trial, it is, on the contrary, to the finer constituted ones a profitable stimulant and the source of precious



benefits. To those privileged natures the horizon widens with the appearance of new obligations; the intellect rises to the occasion; the mind supplies its own shortcomings; the effort to overcome the temporary obstacles leaves behind it a durable intellectual gain, and the level that had to be attained is rapidly surpassed. Such was the case with Louis Napoleon: each day showed in him what might be called the progress of his political education; he discharged the official duties of the Government with a genuine facility that already foretold his real aptitude for the foremost place in the State.

There is no Court without courtiers; no axiom is, unfortunately, more rigorously exact. This escort was not wanting to the Prince, and it was recruited from among the most exalted stations themselves. Amongst the most assiduous near the Prince, General Changarnier showed himself in the foremost rank; certain familiarities of language which the Prince had allowed him to take denoted on the part of the General the eager desire to please. It was very evident at this period that the first place in the State was solidly occupied, that the power was wholly in the hands of the Prince, that he alone was able to bestow a high position. General Changarnier had not been slow to understand this. Under such conditions he could only aim at an increase of dignity. His plan was soon settled. A high military command, that combined the command of the Army of Paris with that of the National Guard, which he already possessed, would give him an exalted position, and make him, after the Prince, the most important personage in the State. It was this position he obtained from the Prince without the latter having sufficiently weighed the power he was about to confide to a man whose character he had by no means solved, whose intentions he had scarcely divined.

General Changarnier multiplied his professions of attachment to the Prince, in whose conflict with

the Assembly he openly took the part of the former. The man of authority and of daring already showed himself in the general. More than once he had treated the resolutions of the Assembly with undisguised contempt. One incident alone reveals the attitude he meant to assume, and which at a given moment he did take up. On the occasion of the siege of Rome by our troops, and of the momentary check our soldiers had suffered, the Prince addressed a letter to General Oudinot, which was both a reply to the hostile clamour of the Mountain and an energetic assertion of personal authority. The letter became an event. General Changarnier emphasized its import still further by having it placarded in every barrack-room, in order to increase the sympathies with which the Prince was already regarded by the army.

The letter was conceived as follows :—

“PARIS, 8th May, 1849.

“My dear General,—

“The telegraphic news which announces the unexpected resistance you have met with under the walls of Rome has deeply grieved me. I hoped, you know, that the inhabitants of Rome would open their eyes to fact, and extend a cordial welcome to an army which came to accomplish a friendly and disinterested mission. It has not been so, and our soldiers were treated as enemies. Our military honour being engaged, I shall not suffer it to receive a slight ; you shall not want for reinforcements. Tell your soldiers that I appreciate their bravery, that I deeply feel their hardships, and that they may ever depend upon my support and on my gratitude.

“LOUIS NAPOLEON.”

A letter such as this, and the use made of it by the Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Paris, could not fail to arouse a storm in the Assembly. This one, as well as others that had agitated the Chamber under similar conditions, had resulted in

a decline of prestige for the Assembly and an increase of importance for the Prince and General Changarnier, who appeared united to defy its expiring authority. Accordingly, the later sittings of the Constituent Assembly had assumed a character of violent hostility. The President of the Republic was insulted by the Mountain. M. Ledru-Rollin demanded his impeachment : he showed the Empire ready to swoop down upon the country ; he openly charged Louis Napoleon and General Changarnier with conspiracy to bring about a *Coup d'État*. The secret societies held themselves in readiness to act upon a sign from the deputies of the Mountain ; they loudly proclaimed their intention to take their revenge, arms in hand, of the vote of the 10th December.

The 12th May, in consequence of a vote of the Chamber on the Roman question, M. Léon Faucher, Minister of the Interior, resuméd the perils that threatened the country in a message worded as follows :—

“After a most animated debate on the affairs of Italy, the National Assembly has rejected, by a majority of 329 as against 292, the motion of M. Jules Favre, to declare that the Ministry had lost the confidence of the country. This vote consolidates the public peace ; the agitators only awaited a vote hostile to the Ministry to rush to the barricades, and to re-enact the days of June. Paris is quiet.

“The following have voted against the order of the day, and against the Government.”

(Here follow the names of those who voted against the order of the day.)

The dangers of 1852 appeared already on the horizon.

This revelation profoundly moved the Assembly, and it avenged on M. Léon Faucher the discredit that weighed upon it. The overthrow of the

Minister of the Interior was the last important act of this Chamber. The 27th May, 1849, it dissolved; and the next day, the 28th, the Legislative Assembly took its place.

Thus ended the career of this Assembly—born in a day of trouble, and wrapped in so much darkness that it would have been difficult at its beginnings to exactly foretell its tendencies. Elected under the despotic pressure of a revolutionary power, it had had the courage to manifest its aversion to the Revolution. Its majority was hostile to the Republic; it had, nevertheless, accepted this form of government. But it had done so out of prudence, in order not to proclaim too hastily its reactionary tendencies—also from a spirit of conciliation, in order not to provoke in her midst divisions that might have exposed the country to the gravest perils. To the majority, the Republic meant a truce, a mere continuation of an interregnum. The future remained open to the hopes of every party; but this majority had counted without the country, and we have already seen how, on the 10th December, the nation had forced it to do for her what it had not dared to do for itself.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### THE 13TH JUNE, 1849.

Strength of the respective parties in the Legislative Assembly.—The consequences of the election of this Chamber.—The events of the 13th June, 1849.—The Members of the Mountain at the Conservatory of Arts and Industry.—The Insurrection checked.—The effect in the Provinces.—The possible consequences of the 13th June.—The tactics of the future enemies of the Empire.

THE elections for the Legislative Assembly were marked by no incident worthy of comment. The party of order showed anew its strength, and the country made manifest once more her antipathy to

the Republic. The large centres where the clubs and the press had exercised their evil influence distinguished themselves by their Socialistic votes, but the Mountain only returned to the new Assembly after it had suffered considerable losses.

At the very beginning of the session the various parties had wished to count their forces; they took the opportunity to do so on the occasion of the nomination of a President of the Chamber. Out of 603 votes M. Dupin was elected by 345. This was about the number of Monarchists of all shades. General de Lamoricière had obtained 76 votes; they were those of the moderate Republicans, the remnants of the old Cavaignac party. M. Ledru-Rollin had united 182 suffrages; they were those of the Mountain, to which were added those of a few advanced Republicans—who did not subscribe, however, to all the doctrines of the former.

Was such an Assembly the confirmation of the vote of the 10th December? Did its election disclose an increase or a decrease of opinion in favour of the Prince? The question had not presented itself to the country in this form; and therefore the country had not to answer it. What was called the party of order united at that time all the monarchical shades, all the enemies of the Revolution. Those various Conservative fractions made common cause against the Republicans, without, perhaps, seriously asking themselves the flag they would adopt to combat the pernicious doctrines of the Republic. The Assembly was the outcome of this accord; the protection of social order was the obvious mission of the new Assembly.

The general belief, however, was that no one more than the Prince had shown and showed himself the energetic defender of the threatened social fabric; and the tacit mission given to almost all the Conservative deputies was this—to support both the grand principles of order and the Prince-President, who was their natural champion. Only

a few Legitimist elections had a different motive: the constituents had given their representatives particular instructions to pursue the restoration of Henri V. But they were the exception; the majority of the Legitimists had not even unfurled their flag in the contest. What were the reasonable expectations from such a Chamber? Undoubtedly an energetic co-operation to repress all attempt at disorder, all physical or moral endeavour on the part of the demagogical element. As for constitutional questions, they could only be brought forward at the risk of immediate dislocation of the majority. The continuance of the provisional arrangement during the whole term of its mission—such, and such only was the painful and enervating prospect the new Assembly offered the country, unless some unforeseen incident came to trouble its existence. It was easy to foresee, though, that the various parties could not condemn themselves to so protracted an inaction. Socialism, above all, was eager to retrieve its successive defeats. The Mountain, which in the Chamber represented its doctrines, its interests, and its passions, was summoned every day by the secret societies and the most ardent demagogues to give the signal for a call to arms. To decide itself to this it only required a pretext; and this pretext the Mountain imagined to have found in the Roman question.

In consequence of the regrettable negotiations with the leaders of the Roman Revolution, the Government had decided at last to push military operations more actively forward and to attack Rome. Between the Italian revolutionaries, who had driven the Holy Father from his States, and the French revolutionaries the feeling of identity of interests and brotherhood was complete. M. Ledru-Rollin had vehemently opposed in the tribune the policy of the Government on this question, which affected both the interests of French Catholicism and



the honour of the national flag. He had appealed to the most burning passions, and threatened the Government to have recourse to arms in order to wrest from it the most dishonourable concessions.

The Government had shown itself firm and resolute, but the Mountain was bound to yield to the pressure of those dangerous auxiliaries from without. M. Ledru-Rollin moved for the impeachment of the President and his Ministers, and at the same time gave the signal for the insurrection. The organs of the demagogic party repeated his call to arms; and at this double watchword, so eagerly expected, the revolutionary mass set itself in motion, descended the faubourgs, formed itself on the boulevards, and marched in serried columns on the Assembly to dictate to it its laws; or, to speak correctly, to substitute a Government of revolt for a Government legally established.

At the same time the Mountain was to raise the revolt at different points of Paris and to constitute a new Government. The Hôtel de Ville, this time-honoured trysting-place of the disaffected, was too efficiently occupied to afford a hope of being taken; so the Conservatory of Arts and Industry had been chosen as the rallying centre; and it was thither that repaired the deputies of the Mountain, headed by Ledru-Rollin and the leaders of the revolt who intended to impose upon France a new edition of 1848. As always, the National Guards gave their co-operation to the insurrection. Colonel Guimard, who commanded the artillery of the citizen army, had escorted the representatives of the Mountain; barricades had been rapidly thrown up in the streets that led to the Conservatory of Arts and Industry; resistance was in a fair way of organisation, and a few hours more would have sufficed to make it formidable. The following placard was stuck up throughout those quarters where the insurrection was supposed to meet with sympathisers and adherents:—

“TO THE FRENCH PEOPLE; TO THE NATIONAL GUARD AND TO THE ARMY.

“The Constitution is being violated, the people are rising to defend it. The Mountain is at its post.

“Vive la République! Vive la Constitution!”

This appeal was signed by a hundred and twenty of the deputies of the Mountain.

But the Government was on its guard. Measures had been taken. General Changarnier kept some imposing forces in readiness. The column that marched on the Assembly was routed. The Conservatory of Arts and Industry was surrounded by the soldiery, and the barricades that masked it taken at the point of the bayonet.

Then began a veritable stampede. The moment the commissary of police, with the soldiery at his back, entered the apartment where the insurrectionary Government was already deliberating, there was a helter-skelter flight. The doors being guarded, the windows were rushed at; and the chief of the fiasco, Ledru-Rollin himself, was obliged to have recourse to this vulgar means of escape. A few hours had sufficed to defeat this fool-hardy insurrection; but if the most energetic measures had not been taken, if the army had not shown itself bent upon doing its duty as it did, Paris and the whole of France would have been plunged once more into the horrors of civil war.

In fact, in every part of France the secret societies were on foot; they only awaited the signal to take up arms in their turn, and if they had not learnt the defeat of their chiefs almost at the same moment that they were informed of the girding on of their bucklers, an abominable “Jacquerie”\* might

\* The author alludes to the revolt of the peasants against the nobles in May, 1358. Whenever the lower classes have risen in France, historians and essayists have, with or without reason, dubbed the upheaval a “Jacquerie;” which made Victor Hugo say, “Every revolution is produced by the virus of the “Jacquerie.”—*Translator.*

have devastated the land. In every great centre, at the selfsame hour that the movement broke out in Paris, and before the tidings of it could have been received, large riotous gatherings took place. The hotels of the prefectures were surrounded by compact and threatening mobs, who demanded communication of the dispatches from Paris, and who evidently held themselves in readiness to take up arms. A note published in the *Patrie*, a semi-official organ, gave a summary of the events that had happened in the provinces. It read as follows:—"It appears now that the plot was to break out the same day in the principal towns of France. Well-known agitators had installed themselves *en permanence* and awaited the news from Paris. At Rheims, Dijon, Lyons, and Toulouse attempts at insurrection occurred: the leaders seem to have acted upon instructions from Paris. At Bordeaux, on the 13th, the sections of various secret societies were sitting *en permanence*; the clubs were convoked for the 14th, in the morning. At Rheims, the president of the club went to the sub-prefecture on the 13th and told the sub-prefect that his authority was at an end, the triumph of the Revolution being a foregone conclusion in Paris. Meanwhile, some other agitators went to the Mayor to tell him of the overthrow of the Government. At Toulouse, a similar attempt was made with the same want of success. The news of the instant suppression of the insurrection in Paris has preserved everywhere the same tranquillity."

The whole pointed a retrospective lesson to the defunct Constituent Assembly, who had overthrown a vigilant Minister, M. Léon Faucher, because he had predicted the danger. The Constituent Assembly had wanted to avenge the representatives whom he had singled out as the enemies of society, as the leaders of the revolt. The peril had become a reality, and the members of the

Mountain whom he had named were the leaders of the insurgents.

This appeal to arms had, as it was bound to do, made a deep impression on the National Assembly; every necessary power had been given to the Government, in view of the eventualities that might arise. On the motion of M. Dufaure, who had become Minister of the Interior, the Assembly authorised the proclamation of a state of siege. It professed itself ready for the most energetic measures of repression, but of repression only.

As for the Prince-President, he had been ready throughout to mount his horse if his presence were wanted. He had acted very prudently in not intervening personally at the crucial hour. His presence might have provoked manifestations whence might have sprung sanguinary collisions. But when the rioters had been dispersed, and the street traffic restored, he insisted upon showing himself to the people. He traversed the boulevards and the Rue de Rivoli, at the head of a brilliant staff, and received a most enthusiastic reception. The cries of "Vive Napoléon!" "Vive l'Empereur!" greeted him on his passage. If he had wished it that day, perhaps, the Empire would have been an accomplished fact then and there.

But it was not in this way that Louis Napoleon intended to arrive at the sovereign dignity. In fact, the question of the restoration of the Empire was already being discussed everywhere. The army, as well as the people, imagined to have made an Emperor on the 10th December, when they raised Louis Napoleon to the foremost rank in the State. Wherever he showed himself in public he was met with the persistent cries of "Vive l'Empereur!" It was not only the people and the army who openly incited the Prince to take the crown. Among the political personages who came in contact with him the wisest inclined to the opinion that the time was ripe to have done with the Republic, and for the

Prince to yield to the wish of the immense majority of the nation. Given that the title of President of the Republic must inevitably be changed one day into that of Emperor, they judged it prudent to avoid the parliamentary surprises and complications that might spring up in a new Chamber. It would be, it was argued, a saving of time, of effort, and perhaps of disorder. But the resistance of the Prince was absolute; he showed himself firm. He deemed himself bound to put the Republican form to the test; he knew that on the strength of his name had been built the compromise between various parties; he wished to respect it, and to honestly attempt to save the country, by remaining within the lawful forms that had been imposed on him. He would eventually admit of more energetic means, but only in the event of his first efforts having proved absolutely powerless. But if on this 13th June the Empire or a life-long power had not been conferred upon the Prince, the question of consolidating the Government had made a vast stride, altogether independent of any act on his part, and simply through the force of circumstances. It was thus that the enemies of the Prince continued to make themselves the most useful auxiliaries of his elevation.

The events of a revolutionary day ever cause a profound emotion to the country; they leave lasting traces from which every interest suffers; they lead to considerations of the motives that have brought on the disturbance, and of the best means to prevent its recurrence. If the day does not result in the victory of those who promoted it, it gravely damages their cause, because it inevitably brings with it a feeling of reaction. This was the logical phenomenon produced in France on the morrow of the 13th June.

We think that the moment has come to resume, in a few words, the warnings of this past which we have rapidly traversed, and the lessons they



pointed for the future. After the catastrophe of February (the overthrow of Louis Philippe), which had increased the strength of the Revolutionaries by profession tenfold, which had enabled them to pursue their organisation with the complicity of the powers first, under the very protection of the law itself afterwards, France from one end to the other was bound, as it were, in a network of anarchical conspiracy: clubs, secret societies, a press absolutely free—those three powerful instruments for the overthrow of any Government that suffers them—pursued, with a terrorising effect, their work of destruction. Terrible revolts had enabled the demagogues to essay their strength, to keep up discipline in their ranks; it was felt that an immense anarchical horde was ready to swoop down upon the country.

This truth, which the enemies of the Empire wanted to deny later on, because it was the justification of the latter, is made but too evident on this day of the 13th June, as it was made evident more than once during the year just ended. And by whom is this truth proclaimed from the tribune? By whom is it pointed out to the country? Who is sufficiently inspired by it to ask exceptional powers of the Chamber? Who deems it sufficiently authoritative to provoke in the Legislature salutary and protective reforms? Those laws that spring from a prudent reaction, who supports them in Parliament? Who defends them against the Mountain? Who votes and gives them to the country? We have already said it: the very men who later on will deny those dangers. And why this contradiction? Because to recognise and to proclaim the peril on the 13th June was to serve their own cause; to recognise later on this peril increased tenfold was to excuse an enemy, to condone his enterprise, to legitimize his success.

When later we shall describe this grand day of the Second December, when we shall find ourselves confronted by the victors and the vanquished of the



13th June, bound in the closest community of interests to make common cause against us, we shall have the right to ask of them, in the severest terms, an account of so deplorable an alliance and of the motives of such a contradiction.

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## CHAPTER V.

### FALL OF THE ODILON MINISTRY.

Mutual Suspicion.—What the various Parties wanted.—What General Changarnier might have wanted.—The Policy of MM. Dufaure and Odilon Barrot.—The Policy of Louis Napoleon.—His Speeches at Chartres, Ham, Saumur, and Tours.—Did he wish for a *Coup d'État* in 1849?—The Prince-President's Letters.—His Message of the 31st October, 1849.—Fall of the Odilon Barrot Ministry.

IF some clouds had already arisen between the Ministers and the Prince, between the Assembly and the Chief of the State, it would have been thought that the events of the 13th June, the fear of the common enemy, would have dispelled, or at least attenuated, this antagonism between the various forces that might co-operate in the saving of the country. It was exactly the reverse that happened. The Chamber took umbrage at the considerable popularity which had revealed itself in favour of Louis Napoleon; it felt the increase of the Prince's strength, and feared the effects of his power. The Ministers and the leaders of the old parties noticed with some tetchiness the growing spirit of independence on the part of their elect of the 10th December; suspicions became the rule with all; imprudent expressions were mischievously discounted, and spiteful and petty tactics did not fail to ensue.

The Prince also had his private grudges—not against the Assembly, which he knew to be deeply divided against itself, and powerless to bring about

a mutual reconciliation detrimental to his interests; not against his Ministers, whom he had the right to replace the day he thought expedient; but against the prominent political individualities who had not been sufficiently guarded in their attempts at dominion; and, above all, against General Changarnier, who, in consequence of the 13th June, had assumed an exceptional importance. The General had in fact managed to gain the confidence of the army, the confidence of the Paris population, that of the majority of the Assembly, and, above all, that of its principal leaders. Hence he became—and his ill-disguised ambition lent force to the supposition—to some, the possible instrument, always for his own advantage, of resistance to the Prince-President; to others the might-be Monk of a Monarchical restoration. It would be premature to pretend that at this particular time either General Changarnier, the Prince, his Ministers, or the Assembly itself, had made up their respective minds as to what they wanted. But if they had not come to any clearly defined resolutions, or taken a firmly determined aim, they had at least disclosed certain unmistakeable tendencies which could not but prove the probable forerunners of the storms whence would issue the hurricane. The Monarchical parties dreamt of the restoration of their Princes; they thought that Louis Napoleon would wear himself out in his attempt at government, and that, with the aid of General Changarnier, a new royalty might spring from a day of disorder. To wait, to continue the provisional arrangement, and to meanwhile harass the Chief of the State—these were their tactics.

General Changarnier dreamt of anything and everything. He first applied himself to the increase of his own importance and popularity, of his influence with the Army and the National Guards, and, above all, to win the confidence of the leaders of the old parties, in order to provide

a solid basis for his operations. If once acquired, what use did he propose to make of this power at the opportune moment? That which circumstances should dictate to him. He might restore royalty, and obtain from it the title of *Connétable*, with the honours and profits such a dignity comports, or he might more naturally assume the Dictatorship on his own account, and remain, in pursuance of some new form to be decided by circumstances, the Chief of the State. To deny those various assertions would be to deny evidence. There is ocular and moral proof for what we assume. The General did not always observe the discretion in his speech which his high station and his more exalted hopes compelled; he gave his confidence without sufficient precaution, and thus caused himself to be very easily unriddled. To flatter one and another in order to induce them to stay on his side, he was often betrayed into saying too much, and his secret was not always strictly kept.

As for the Ministers, who, under a régime as yet more parliamentary than personal, constituted a kind of body in the State, they also had their plans. M. Odilon Barrot and M. Dufaure believed in the possibility of applying the Constitution of 1848. They saw in the practical working of the Republican régime a kind of continuation of the parliamentary government with which they had been bound up for eighteen years; they would have easily consoled themselves for the loss of the fallen Monarchy if they could have met, under a new form, with institutions satisfying their liberal tendencies. The title given to the Chief of the State was with them but of secondary importance, provided that by his side there existed an elective representation, with a controlling and governing Ministry. On this condition, and with such a guarantee, they would have consented to sacrifice the hereditary principle in the bestowal of supreme

power. In one word, they became sincere Constitutional Republicans.

We do them no injustice when we say that they unconsciously yielded to the influence of their aptitudes. Both were men of talent, good debaters, familiar with the procedure of Parliament; but if they combined the gifts that enable men to rule Assemblies, they did not possess, perhaps, in a proportionate degree, the qualities, equally rare, required for the exercise of power more specially dependent upon the Chief of the State. With them parliamentarism was, so to speak, the universal panacea. In this they committed an error, because they did not sufficiently consider the peculiar circumstances of the time.

In those various combinations that exercised the parties and the remarkable individualities at their heads, dynastic preoccupations and personal questions held the foremost place; there was little thought for the wishes of the country, which was regarded merely as an eventual patrimony. The nation's fear was speculated on, and the conviction prevailed that she would accept any and every solution that guaranteed stability and order.

The Prince allowed the country a larger share of concern in his preoccupations. The direction of his policy was inspired above all by a consideration for the preferences and the interests of the nation. Possessing to a high degree the instinct, as it were, of the nation's wants, he principally aimed at giving her those satisfactions which in his opinion were compatible with the welfare of the country. But according to his ideas the parliamentary régime was inadmissible as a principle of government for France. If he had felt the least reservation about the value of this theory with regard to normal and tranquil times, he also felt that to bring France out of her present troubles the parliamentary régime should at the outset be rigorously put aside. If in a general way there

existed in his mind on this doctrine foregone conclusions which swayed him too exclusively, and became at subsequent periods the cause of considerable errors, he was at least in the right with regard to the transitory period in which he was then moving. He intended, above all, to increase and strengthen the principle of authority, and perhaps at the same time to weaken the power of the Assembly.

No doubt the Prince was the first to profit by this system, seeing that constitutionally he embodied the highest representation of this authority. But if ambition—assuredly not misplaced in the position to which his birth and the unfettered will of the nation had raised him—entered those calculations, patriotism was incontestably their dominant motive.

In carefully observing the situation, he perceived for the moment no one but himself designed to assume the supreme power. As we have said already, the fall of the Orleans dynasty was too recent to admit for one moment the idea of the restoration of one of its princes. M. de Chambord represented, no doubt, long centuries of grandeur, and everything in his principles and person was worthy of sympathy and respect. But his party, however honourable, only found its adherents among the higher spheres of society. It was a staff without soldiers, and public opinion of the moment formulated its urgent democratic needs. M. le Comte de Chambord would never have consented to submit to them, while with Louis Napoleon they formed part and parcel of his programme of government.

Those pretenders put aside, was there a man who possessed the necessary compass to aspire to the foremost rank? If so, who was there that had rendered services sufficiently eminent, whose fame was sufficiently wide-spread, to replace the authority of princely birth and to supply the strength

which, rightly or wrongly, is always associated with exalted origin?

Given that no pretender, no serious rival, could dispute this foremost rank with the Prince, that he was eminently the man of the situation, was he not justified then in believing himself entrusted with a providential mission? And if he had this faith—as indeed it possessed his whole soul—if he saw no deliverance for his country except through himself, was he then so very guilty to prepare himself for the accomplishment of his task? was it a crime then to seek to aggrandise his individuality, to prepare it for the destinies of the future, to endeavour to make itself sufficiently strong, sufficiently powerful, that in the hour of peril it might take the upper hand.

Be it personal ambition or more exactly the devotion to his country that inspired the Prince—and we shall be able to show that the two interests were then confounded—it will not be denied that his endeavour to raise the power of which he was the depositary was an act of opportune and far-seeing policy. To attain his end he sought the opportunity to speak in public: he found it in his messages to the Assembly, in his official communications, in the inauguration of monuments and railways, in the reply to the speeches addressed to him at banquets. His discourses had almost always a direct relation to circumstances; several have been programmes; all showed proofs of an incontestable loftiness of mind; their form was literary, their tendency at once conservative and visibly democratic. Their effect was ever considerable; more than once they rose to the dignity of an event.

The reader has not forgotten the Prince's manifesto at the moment of the election of the 10th December; that was his programme, everything had been said in it. The questions of home and foreign policy, the leading social principles, the



problems of economy, everything that could interest religion, property, the army, finance, had been successively the subject of loyal and clearly defined declarations on his part. In his subsequent discourses he had only to insist, according to the surroundings and incidents of the moment, on the maxims which he had made his rule of conduct; to show more and more his justification as Chief of the State, to vulgarise, as it were, his method of government. In his proclamation to the people on the morrow of the insurrection of the 13th June, he announced his firm determination to conquer anarchy and restore order and security to France. He pronounced these memorable words: "It is time that the good citizen should feel secure once more, that the bad one should begin to fear." He warned the disorderly that he "would shrink at nothing to restore security to the country."

At Chartres the 6th of July, 1849, in recalling the crusade which St. Bernard had preached there, he glorified this great saint "for having raised the worship of things spiritual above the worship of material interest." Religion might, indeed, foresee in this prince its energetic and believing champion.

At Amiens he skilfully evoked the recollection of the Treaty of Amiens to hold out a friendly and pacific hand to England. He showed himself a partisan of alliances that might be useful to France.

At Ham,\* in a speech of singular boldness, he took his own captivity as the text for an uncompromising condemnation of the spirit of revolt; he made a public apology in face of the whole of the nation as it were, so that it might go forth throughout the land that the impulses of youth had given way to mature reflections and to the submission to authority.

\* Where he was confined in company with General Montholon and Doctor Conneau from 1840 to 1846. The stone-mason, Badinguet, whose name was ever afterwards bestowed upon Louis Napoleon in derision, and to whom he owed his escape, only died in November, 1883.—*Translator.*

At Angers, in placing himself there, as in every circumstance, under the powerful patronage of his uncle Napoleon I., the name of whom the people loved to hear, and whose memory they fondly expected to see revive in him, he put the country on her guard against the excesses of liberty. While admitting the latter to a share still too great in the government, he claimed the application of a system tending to implant in France—not the savage liberty that permitted every one to do what he chose, but the liberty of civilized nations, permitting every one to do that which could not be hurtful to the community at large.

At Nantes he evinced all his solicitude for commerce and industry by impressing upon its laborious population the new lease of life that would accrue to stagnant trade from the wisdom of parties that would permit the firm revival of order and peace.

At Saumur, at the very gates of the celebrated college that gives us so many valiant officers, he found the noblest expressions to “extol the military spirit, the habits of order, discipline, and graduated superiority, that not only make the good soldier, but the good citizen also.” He justly pointed out these essential virtues as being “in critical times the safeguards of the country. . . . The religion of duty, loyalty to the standard,” such was the device he held up to the admiration of the military youth.

At Tours he went with unfaltering hand and equal candour to the very core of the burning questions; he went straight to the apprehensions which the intrigue of parties tried to propagate.

At this period of 1849 the Prince believed sincerely that the country might be saved by the natural working of her institutions, by the loyal application of the Constitution, and by the opportune revision of some of its imprudent provisions. We have already said how after the 10th of December, and again after the 13th June, he had energeti-

cally refused to take—or, to speak correctly, to accept—the crown. He considered that the time had come to let in the full light of publicity upon his conduct and his intentions, to defend himself from unjust accusations, to protest against plans which he had not.

France, in fact, had then no need of an 18th Brumaire to set herself free from the perils of a Revolution; the times were not the same. He proved it by appealing to a spirit of conciliation, in order to prevent such complications as those which had made the 18th Brumaire a necessity. Therefore the Prince acted in good faith, and in the true spirit of the time, when he said—"Our laws may be more or less defective, but they are susceptible of improvement. Therefore trust to the future, without concerning yourselves about *Coups d'État* or insurrections: there is no pretext for the former; the latter stand not the least chance of success."

To those who wished to read between the lines the Prince therefore said: "I give myself wholly to you to govern with the Constitution; but on the condition of a revision which shall give back to France the free exercise of her will, which shall enable her to choose her Chief as she likes, and where she likes, and which shall attempt no violence to her preferences by an iniquitous exclusion or a premeditated ostracism." It was tantamount to a warning.

We must insist upon this declaration at Tours, and again point out its value; because it contains the whole of Louis Napoleon's policy: it absolutely enables one to gauge his thoughts.

And why should he have thought of a *Coup d'État* at this time of 1849, when every legal means was still so logically open to him? Was not the Constitution open to revision? Did not the 111th Article of it expressly provide for this right? Was it thought likely then, that the Assembly would dare to ignore this necessity when confronted with

the manifest pressure of public opinion? And if the Constitution could be thus lawfully revised, if no limit had been marked out by the Legislature, if all its provisions could be discussed anew, might not anything and everything result from this lawful modification of the fundamental contract? Might not the President be declared capable of being re-elected? Might not a prolongation of office be granted to him? Was not a life-presidentship a form admissible to and compatible with the Republican doctrine? And to go farther still, even if the country, if the Assembly had wished it, where was the obstacle to the restoration of the Empire without the least shock, without a *Coup d'État*? Logic was, therefore, wholly at one with truth.

To those who have known the Emperor, and shared, in however slight a degree, his confidence, it is very certain that his mind would have ever leaned to lawful means. Louis Napoleon always placed his pride in being beloved: all evidences of sympathy flattered the weaker side of his nature; those that came from a whole nation naturally aroused his most lively feelings. To owe the supreme power to a France lawfully consulted was his dream; and the dream was capable of being realised. To transgress the bounds of this legality, to find the supreme power there, even with the complicity and the ratification of the country, was a proceeding that wounded his susceptibilities. He did not look upon it as a sufficiently conclusive manifestation of spontaneity. His secret ambition aimed higher. Louis Napoleon was inspired by the belief that he accomplished a providential mission—that, like himself, the whole of the nation was thoroughly convinced of this truth, and that no force could divert from their natural current the events that would lead to the increase of his powers. He so inevitably saw himself in the future with the crown on his head, that he considered himself, as it were, outside the pale of this great contest. He only

aimed to smooth the transition between the régime that was foundering and the one dawning at the horizon; he was convinced that no sacrifice would prevent the country from uniting her destinies to his; that the country would overcome all resistance to maintain him in power—to enable him to extend, and to secure it to him for ever. One might, if so disposed, charge him with presumption and fatalism: one would commit an error by accusing him of vulgar ambition. We were to a sufficient degree the intimate sharers of his inmost thoughts to be able to affirm that he went even so far as to escape the very ambition which the greatest minds feel stirring within them when they draw near to the realisation of supreme power; and always for this very simple reason—that he did not think it necessary to covet what he regarded as an assured patrimony.

Are not Strasburg and Boulogne the most convincing proofs of this mystical faith of Louis Napoleon? In engaging in those foolhardy adventures he shut his eyes to the most obvious truths, to indulge only his blind hopes; he refused to admit to himself the rashness of his enterprise, face to face with a Government so firmly established as was that of Louis Philippe. At those two periods he perceived nought but the chimerical welcome of a people who, in his opinion, were only awaiting the opportunity of hailing the return of the ruler of her dreams. If it be but too evident, as facts have proved it to be, that Louis Napoleon counted upon arriving unhindered at the throne by merely landing at Boulogne or entering Strasburg, is it not much more admissible that as Chief of the State, already seated in the presidential chair, he considered beyond a doubt his remaining in power and even his elevation to the imperial dignity.

We remain, therefore, within the strict limits of an undeniable truth when we say that in this Tours manifesto the language of the Prince was



loyal, sincere, and without an afterthought. They were not words of hypocrisy, calculated to lull his enemies to sleep, to breed a false security: what the Prince had said in this discourse, as well as in the others he thought it, he wished it, and he believed it to be possible; it was the heartfelt truth, as it might be the truth of the future. But was not this very journey which the Prince was then taking through the provinces a direct refutation of the idea with which he was credited—of wishing to possess himself of the supreme power by violent means? What, indeed, did he do but prepare public opinion for a new election which he deemed inevitable? He greeted the country herself as the sovereign arbiter of his destinies; and if it were not lowering the Prince, even for a moment, from the high station he occupied, we should say that what we ought to see in him during those triumphal peregrinations\* was the candidate for the supreme power, who wanted to enlighten the people in view of a new election, rather than the despotic master come to prepare beforehand the pardon for an enterprise which, Heaven be thanked, could dispense with a pardon.

After the discourses in the provinces, where the Prince had met with the most dazzling ovations, came his discourses in Paris.

At the banquet given by the exhibitors at the Exhibition of National Industry, the Prince-President

\* Triumphant peregrinations is indeed the correct expression; for, with the exception of Gambetta, no President, whether of the Republic or of the Chamber, ever met with similar receptions. First of all, no man ever appeared to better advantage amidst public pomp and circumstances than Louis Napoleon. Lord Normanby, by no means an admirer of the Prince-President, said that he looked "every inch a King." He was exceedingly generous, and had, above all, the art of making himself very agreeable, while rigidly conforming to conventionalities. He was always particularly careful to say the right word at the right time, and never omitted to embrace a number of worthy persons of both sexes supposed to have rendered important services to the State, even if those services did not extend beyond the making of lint for the wounded soldiers of his uncle, or having embraced the latter on his marriage day. To the clergy he was especially deferential.—*Trans.*



reviewed in the happiest terms the sound doctrines of economy. He criticised the unhealthy utopian visions, by means of which it was sought to deceive the working classes and to arouse the hatred of class against class. "Do not fail," he said to the exhibitors, "to propagate among your workmen the sound doctrines of political economy. By granting them their just share in the distribution of labour, prove to them that the interest of the rich is in no way opposed to the interest of the poor."

One must read all these discourses of the Prince, must weigh each of his words, because all had their value, to form a proper estimate of the man and of his sincere intentions at that period. They provide an interesting study of the undoubted progress Louis Napoleon was making in the art of government. The finer constituted nature is very quickly raised by an exalted position. We have already said it in speaking of the Prince himself. One has but to read the work of the first year of his presidency, and even the most prejudiced will be compelled to acknowledge that our praise is but the exact expression of the truth.

Read those speeches, you who so bitterly lavish calumny and injury upon the memory of Napoleon III., and if there still remain within you one spark of justice, you will find your anger disarmed. Notwithstanding your determined hostility, you will be dazzled by the light of truth, of justice, and of goodness, that shows through all those emanations of his thoughts. At every page you will see his love of country, his constant solicitude for this people you pretend to love so much, pierce through.

Off with your hats before this noble figure, instead of loading it with injury! For he aimed, by regular and pacific means, to assure to the people the welfare which you seek in vain to give them by your perilous methods. Had you been sincere, had not the lust of power obscured the love of country in you, you would have acknowledged that this Prince,

in his leanings, in his convictions, by his writings, by his manifest preferences, was much nearer the tendencies you affect than he was to ours. You would have hailed in him the crowned chief of the principles wherewith you deck your programmes; you would have perceived even on his throne the love of democracy pierce through his purple.

But let us leave these pardonable digressions to come back to the Prince, to follow him step by step through the revelation of his character, of his tendencies, of the aims he pursued. If those speeches of Louis Napoleon disclosed his personal feelings and enlightened the country with regard to his tendencies, it was, after all, but an indirect share in the political movement. His heart's desire was to take an effective part in it, and to exercise his authority. He reached this end by the more official manifestations of his will. His letters to General Oudinot and to Lieutenant-Colonel Edgar Ney\*—both of which produced so great a sensation—turned the lime-light upon him personally, and won him the favour of some, the criticism of others, but the notice of all: to which fact he attached, not without reason, a genuine importance.

In each of those letters might be noticed the dawn of an idea which he felt it his interest to bring to light.

In his letter to General Oudinot he conveyed to the army his solicitude for its welfare, and his patriotic emotions for the honour of the flag. Later, and still with reference to the siege of Rome, he traced with a firm hand the true motive of the expedition, and summarized the conditions on which he wished to restore the temporal power of the Pope. He freely allowed for the just susceptibilities which blundering intrigue had bred. "If

\* The fourth and youngest son of Marshal Ney, born in 1812. In 1857, after his brother's death, he was authorized to take the title of Prince de la Moskowa. The Prince committed suicide about two years ago, for reasons which up to the present remain a mystery.—*Trans.*

France," he said, "does not sell her services, she exacts, at any rate, the gratitude due to her sacrifices and abnegation." He once more found some noble words to thank the army for its behaviour. Thus day by day he progressed in community of interest and feeling with it, and by means to which no one could seriously object.

In all those manifestations of his thoughts—in his speeches, his toasts, his letters, his messages—the Prince had his plan, which he steadily, and one might say ably, pursued. No doubt by doing this he deviated from the traditional and regular customs of parliamentary government. He was fully aware of it. When people charged him with only showing his ignorance on those occasions, the accusation was not strictly true. We have already pointed out the motives of the Prince in thus thrusting his personality to the front. We may add that he used it as a right of legitimate defence. What had not been said, written, and published concerning his supposed nonentity, his inability to share the direction of public affairs, his poverty of intellect? The most important personages themselves, with M. Thiers at their head, whose interest it was to lessen his prestige, to ruin his authority, had not they profited by the confidence of the public in their authority to support those amazing calumnies? Was not, therefore, the Prince strictly within his right to attempt himself to obtain the acknowledgment of his intellectual qualities by the most loyal means, and to reassure the country on the worth of the man whom she had entrusted with her destinies? It was not an attack; it was merely a parry and counter-thrust at the same time: only the thrust showed and left its traces.

But besides this grand popular rostrum which he created for himself, and where he had the whole of the country for an audience, the Constitution gave him access to the tribune of the Chamber itself. It was in the form of a message that his voice might

make itself heard before the representatives of the country. The day came when the Prince thought it necessary to have recourse to this new means of action, and to add to the manifestations of his thoughts, already numerous, a still more important disclosure of his policy and his tendencies. He had shown the country that he was familiar with all the great social and political questions, that he was a deep thinker and a statesman; he now wanted to show that he could join the deed to the word, and that he shrank not from any of the responsibilities of power.

The Ministry of the 20th December had for nearly a year held the helm of government. Almost exclusively, the Prince had, in fact, been nothing more than an illustrious passenger on the vessel that carried the destinies of the State, and to whom, out of deference rather than from a feeling of duty, the secret of its manœuvres had been disclosed. He had submitted, not without some show of temper and some attempts at insubordination, to this tutelage, inconsistent with his dignity; he had resigned himself to being thus thrust in the background, so long as he deemed it indispensable to the situation and useful to his practical education as Chief of the State. The 31st October he considered himself able to trust to his own wings, to shake off the yoke, and to take an active part in the affairs of the State. He dismissed the Ministry which had made him feel its preponderance too much, which wanted to govern according to views other than his, other than those he considered beneficial to the nation. He took a Ministry that would accept his counsel, be guided by his ideas, make common cause, and thus resolutely march with him to the goal he wished to reach—the establishment of order, the pacifying of party spirit, the development of the people's welfare.

The following were the terms in which Louis

Napoleon informed the Assembly and the country of the change of his Ministry and of the motives that had led to this step:—

“THE ELYSÉE, 31st October, 1849.

“Monsieur le Président,—

“In the grave crisis we are traversing the understanding that should exist between the different powers of the State cannot be maintained unless, animated by mutual confidence, they explain themselves candidly to each other. In order to set the example of this sincerity, I beg to inform the Assembly of the reasons that have decided me to change the Ministry, and to separate from men whose services I am proud to acknowledge, whom I regard with friendship and gratitude.

“To consolidate the Republic, threatened from so many sides by anarchy, to ensure public order more efficiently than it has been ensured hitherto, to preserve the prestige of France abroad at its former height, men are wanted who, while animated by patriotic devotion, acknowledge the necessity of a firm but single directing power, and of a clearly defined policy; who compromise the supreme power by no show of indecision; who are as careful of my own responsibility as of theirs; as guarded in actions as in speech.

“For nearly a twelvemonth I have given sufficient proofs of abnegation not to have my real intentions misjudged. Without animosity against individuals, or against parties, I have admitted men of the most varied opinions to office, without obtaining, however, the results I hoped for from this attempt at conciliation. Instead of operating a blending of shades, I have accomplished nothing but a neutralizing of forces. The attempt to bring about a conformity of views and intentions has been hindered—the spirit of conciliation mistaken for weakness. Scarcely were the dangers of the streets passed but the old parties were seen to raise their



standards anew, to recommence their rivalry, to alarm the country by sowing the seeds of unrest.

“Amidst this confusion France, uneasy because she sees no guiding power, seeks in vain the hand, the will of him she elected on the 10th December. But this will cannot make itself felt unless there be a complete community of ideas, views, and convictions between the President and his Ministers, and unless the Assembly associates itself with the thoughts of the nation, of which the election of the Executive was the expression.

“The 10th of December meant the victory of a whole system.

“Because the name of Napoleon contains in itself a whole programme. It means order, authority, religion, the welfare of the people at home, national dignity abroad. It is this policy, inaugurated by my election, that I wish to see prevail, supported by the Assembly and by the nation. I wish to show myself worthy of the trust of the nation by maintaining the Constitution I have sworn to respect: by my loyalty, perseverance, and firmness, I wish to inspire the country with a confidence in me such as will lead to the revival of business and faith in the future. The working of a Constitution has no doubt a great influence on the destinies of a country; but the manner of its application exercises, perhaps, a greater one. The shorter or longer duration of a Government contributes powerfully to the stability of things; but assurance to society comes also through the ideas and principles which the Government causes to prevail.

“Therefore let us endeavour to raise authority without disquieting true liberty; let us try to allay public fear by boldly grappling with evil passions, and by directing noble instincts into useful channels. Let us confirm the principle of religion without abandoning aught of the conquests of the Revolution. And we shall save the country in spite



of parties and vulgar ambition, in spite of the imperfections to which our institutions are liable."

A similar message disclosed entirely new horizons. The Prince openly abandoned his rôle of comparative submission and docility to take up the reins of power and to become the virtual Chief of the nation. The veil was rent; the man showed himself in his true light.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### THE MINISTRY OF THE 31ST OCTOBER, AND THE LAW OF THE 31ST MAY.

The Ministry of the 31st October.—Its reception.—Mission of the New Cabinet.—The public functionaries: their rôle in the departments.—Partial elections of the 10th March, 1850.—De Flotte, Vidal, and Carnot.—The scare of the leaders of the old parties.—The *Burgraves* at the Elysée.—Indecision.—The Law of the 31st May.

THE sudden change of Ministry caused an immense surprise. The show of authority had the effect of a bombshell. For several days the political world was wholly given up to comment on the event. The message of the President was read and re-read in order to get at his intentions, and to obtain a rule of conduct from them. Friends and loyal adversaries alike agreed in praise of the loftiness of its language. On various benches of the Assembly, the Barrot Ministry was regretted. It numbered among its members men of worth, who had ably and courageously sustained tumultuous struggles; but, seeing that they in no way clearly personified any of the parties, their retirement only gave rise to expressions of personal sympathy.

The new Ministry was coldly received. According to the parliamentary traditions of the last thirty years, men were not heaven-born Ministers; the

dignity had to be slowly won by long and patent evidences of exceptional merit. Remarkable speeches, reports on great questions of State, on finance, on administration, on political economy, denoted to the Chief of the State the men who might best serve the country, and who were most likely to obtain the respectful consideration of the Chamber. Thus was created, as it were, a kind of ministerial forcing-ground. The future Minister served, so to say, an apprenticeship; he nursed his importance; and the day events called him to office he was ready to play his part. Each group had its men, and according to the political whirligig they assumed or quitted office. Their accession to public affairs was nearly always indicated in so precise a fashion, at any rate for the principal portfolios, that public opinion and the press could name them before the *Moniteur* had spoken. Under the Monarchy of July the King had often to accept rather than to choose his Ministers.

The Republic had only suspended those traditions for a moment. They were resumed almost immediately, and the Barrot Ministry was the expression of them. MM. Barrot, Dufaure, de Tocqueville, de Falloux, had all the requisite prestige to accede to office. Notwithstanding the very sterling merit of the Ministers of the 31st October, it should be said that not all of them fulfilled the required conditions. Some, however, were already ranked among the notabilities of Parliament. M. Bineau, who assumed the portfolio of Public Works, was an engineer of considerable ability; he had drawn up some remarkable reports, was a fluent speaker, and perfectly at home in the tribune.

M. Ferdinand Barrot became Minister of the Interior. A distinguished lawyer, he had for a long while been a member of the Assemblies, he had an extensive experience both of men and things, a very correct judgment, a reputation for straightforwardness and loyalty; and it was owing to those

qualities that the Prince had conferred upon him the functions of general secretary to the Presidency. It was owing to the confidence he had won from the Chief of the State in this delicate situation, that he was charged with the difficult mission of reconstituting in a great measure the administrative *personnel*.

M. Fould, called to the Ministry of Finances, had for some time been denoted for the post. He was at the head of an important banking house, and inspired confidence to the financial world.

Admiral Romain-Desfossés, one of our most valiant sailors, became Minister of Marine.

As for the other Ministers, their choice was not quite so well understood. General de la Hitte took Foreign Affairs; as a soldier he enjoyed a considerable and deserved esteem, but he was not a diplomatist. The appointment of General d'Hautpoul to the Ministry for War was severely criticised, and not without cause. It was known that he owed his portfolio to his deferential assiduousness at the Elysée.

M. Dumas, the Minister of Agriculture and Commerce, was already an illustrious savant, but he had given no proof as yet, with regard to the grave questions he had to resolve, of the remarkable aptitude he showed later on.

Finally, M. Rouher and M. de Parieu, respectively Ministers of Justice and Public Education, were two young deputies whose future career up till now had been a mere matter of speculation. He who chose them gave proof of great discrimination. Every one knows by this time the exceptional qualities M. Rouher showed himself to be possessed of; and if certain shortcomings unquestionably revealed themselves in this remarkable mind, no one can deny that he was one of the most prominent individualities of the reign of Louis Napoleon. If from various causes he became a disastrous counsellor instead of remaining

a marvellous auxiliary, as he showed himself to be at the Ministries of Public Works and Commerce, it was because advantage was taken of his yielding character to entice him from the administration of affairs, which were his favourite element, to thrust him headlong into the whirl of politics. They wanted to make a statesman of him: such rôle was consistent neither with his character nor with his temperament. Later on, in studying this remarkable figure we shall see that they only succeeded in making a splendid advocate of the Crown of M. Rouher—or rather an advocate of every cause the defence of which it pleased the chief power to impose upon him. We shall see the omnipotence this submission procured for him, the regrettable use he made of this power, the compromises to which he lent himself in order to escape the bitterness of retirement. Finally, we shall see how the most brilliant faculties may be irretrievably damaged by the absence of character and the want of conviction.

As for M. de Parieu, he realized the expectations formed of him. His speech of the 5th October, 1848,\* had been noticed by the Chief of the State, who from that day made up his mind to attach M. de Parieu to him. His vigorous intellect, his talents as an orator, his reputation for honesty, marked his future place in the higher regions of the State—in which he firmly maintained himself in spite of the tenacious animosity of his rival, the Minister of Justice. By his services M. de Parieu justified Louis Napoleon's opinion of him. He was one of the luminaries of the Council of State; he was one of those counsellors useful to but independent of the Crown; he remains one of the noteworthy men of our time.

As may be seen, the surprise with which the Ministry of the 31st October had been received

\* Curiously enough, this speech was absolutely against the election of the Chief of the Executive by the nation.—*Trans.*

was, to say the least, exaggerated. The future showed that this Ministry contained men of real talent. The coldness it met with sprang, however, from the conditions of its creation, rather than from the nature of its composition. The Assembly felt a secret spite at being for nothing in its origin. In fact no vote had demonstrated that the dismissed Ministry had forfeited the confidence of Parliament. But what was the Assembly in the State? What services did it render, and what could be expected from it? Had not it already shown its absolute powerlessness? Did not its very internal divisions condemn it to a condition of barrenness? It was merely fighting the air; it could only be an obstacle and never become an aid. Its deliberations could only result in a restless continuance of a ruinous provisional state of things, at whose end uprose a formidable problem. It possessed no elements in its midst capable of solving this problem. Instead of leaning upon this Assembly, which grudged him its support, the Prince turned his looks to the country herself; and, making common cause with her, he prepared the way for a partnership between them.

Besides, it was high time to act, and the Prince had understood this. At its accession to office the Odilon Barrot Ministry had found the prefectures, the administration of justice, the most important as well as subordinate situations under Government, occupied by a *personnel* devoted to General Cavagnac, and to the ideas which the former Chief of the Executive represented. From temperament, as well as from a similarity of tendencies, MM. Odilon Barrot and Dufaure had maintained in their situations the majority of those functionaries, declared Republicans, the greatest number of whom held their nominations from the Government of 1848. Such functionaries could, naturally, not make up their minds to serve the policy of the Prince. If they disguised their hostility at all, it was only to avoid



dismissal and to bide their time until 1852, when they firmly counted upon the return of a real Republican to the Presidency of the Republic. All the subordinates of those functionaries who shared their sentiments were protected by them. The result was that a notable part of the departments was still in the hands of the enemies of the Chief of the State. The Prince had often asked MM. Odilon Barrot and Dufaure to dismiss those functionaries; his repeated requests had been in vain. The very ones whom the Elysée wished to remove were loaded with praise; their efforts to maintain order were pertinently insisted upon; the suspicions of which they were the objects were attributed to unjust and interested denunciations: finally, they were allowed to remain.

Apart from the prejudices the Prince himself suffered from this state of things, it produced serious inconveniences from a more general point of view. To the departments, to the communes, above all, to such of their inhabitants who take a share, however small or large, in the management of local affairs, the benefit of a change of régime, in accordance with their sympathies, becomes only appreciable the day when their neighbouring depositaries of the public power are in harmony of feeling with them, and consequently with the Government. While the agents of the former régime, who were their natural adversaries, remain in office, there is no change in the situation. No doubt the latter are no longer the vanquished: but neither are they the victors; nevertheless it is the rôle to which they have a right. They often compromised themselves for the cause. They made sacrifices, one cannot blame them for expecting the reward of their devotion; they contributed to the success, they wish to reap its benefits. Their claim is a legitimate one. The Republicans, the makers of revolutions, take good care to put this doctrine



into practice. They have unfalteringly and always applied it; they have cashiered prefects, sub-prefects, secretaries-general, councillors of prefecture, those magistrates that were removable, mayors, deputy-mayors; they have not even held their hand at the modest rural constable.

The Prince was therefore within the truth and within his right in claiming from his Ministers functionaries that were devoted to his policy, who should not prove themselves the persistent adversaries of his friends in the departments, who would not beforehand and clandestinely endeavour to foil his eventual re-election to the Chief Magistracy of the country when constitutionally he might become re-eligible. By appointing M. Ferdinand Barrot to the Ministry of the Interior—the Ministry of politics *par excellence*—the Prince had hit upon a happy device. He was sure to be loyally served: he might, moreover, count upon a happy discretion and moderation on the part of his Minister—qualities exceedingly precious to the task in hand. In a few weeks a goodly number of prefects and functionaries of all kinds were cashiered or shifted; and the choice of their successors was calculated to obliterate the sufferings that had been endured. The French Administration became respectable; and, our irreconcilable adversaries apart, every one will be bound to admit that the branch of administration was worthy of respect and made good its claim to the gratitude of the nation.

Before the Chamber the Ministry of the 31st October preserved a prudent attitude; it was very careful to avoid all complications, and only engaged in debate when silence would have been desertion. It preferred deeds to words; both the interests of the country and of the Prince could but gain by the former. Thanks to this tacit disarmament, tranquillity reigned once more in the Chamber, and might have continued to reign for

some time but for a fresh incident which threw the country once more into extreme uneasiness.

In consequence of the disturbances of the 13th June, 1849, those of the members of the Assembly that were arrested as leaders of the insurrection were put upon their trial before the High Court of Justice. After protracted debates, and notwithstanding the eloquent efforts of their defenders, thirty-one representatives were condemned. The Chamber had naturally pronounced their disqualification, and the elections had been fixed for the 10th March. The energetic propaganda of the Socialist party, through its papers, by its emissaries, above all through the secret societies, made the Conservatives very uneasy about the result of those elections. Events proved that their fears were but too well founded. The Paris election, on which all eyes were principally turned, produced the most deplorable results. The candidates of order, General de la Hitte, MM. Bonjean and Foy, were defeated. The representatives elected were De Flotte, one of the chiefs of the barricades of June, 1848, and condemned in consequence; MM. Vidal and Carnot, both chosen by committees affiliated to the Mountain.

This result caused a genuine panic among the Conservative party. Our unhappy country, by dint of being tossed about by agitation and surprises, has ended by becoming pretty well accustomed to her misfortunes, and to create for herself a kind of listlessness, to escape, as it were, from a permanent fever. Instead of a well-considered and prudent appreciation of the situation, a kind of abrupt reaction is resorted to; one goes to sleep in an atmosphere of false security, and when awaking, the perils that might have been but were not foreseen are exaggerated. This happened on the morrow of the election of the 10th March. Paris suddenly presented an aspect of sadness. Public securities fell considerably; business came sud-

denly to a standstill, and the majority of the Chamber, under the influence of this movement, deemed that the hour had come for the application of energetic measures to resist the advance of Socialism.

The situation was very clearly traced out. On one side was seen this revolutionary conspiracy pressing ahead with raised vizor and threatening to invade everything; notwithstanding the exile or imprisonment of its principal chiefs, it could boast new ones who were ready for the fray and continued the organisation of secret societies. On the other side was the Assembly, divided against itself, wavering and suspicious, wishing to defend itself against a formidable foe, but hesitating to accept the heroic means that offered themselves to her to lay him low. These means the constitutional compact pointed them out: the revision of the Constitution was allowed; the moment had come to have recourse to this supreme alternative.

The Republic had once more been put to a practical test; it had shown its impotency—it only showed itself to be a fertile source of pernicious agitation. It became more evident each day that the country must come back to the monarchical form. There lay deliverance, though hidden by obstacles. Face to face with the revolutionary conspiracy on one side, with the Assembly divided against itself on the other; face to face with those two adversaries—the one powerful for attack, the other paralysed for resistance—the country saw the growth of the power which was her own work. Its expectation of deliverance centred more and more in the Prince she had elected. The chiefs of the dynastic parties assuredly perceived this manifest tendency; but instead of resigning themselves to a necessity to which sooner or later they would have to yield, instead of patriotically consummating the sacrifice of their chimerical hopes, they wore themselves out in perilous efforts to continue the

enervating provisional state of affairs which went by the name of the Republic. They flattered themselves that they were safeguarding the future; they only sacrificed the country to their illusions.

To the warning contained in the vote of the 10th March, they replied once more by an expedient of no lasting value. In their consternation the leaders of the majority repaired to the Elysée early on the morrow of the election. They had asked the Prince to devise with them as to the best means to weather the situation. At this meeting, accepted by the Prince, no understanding could be arrived at—and always for the selfsame reason, that not one of the leaders of the old parties would consent to anything that might fetter his action or pledge the future. No agreement, however easy in appearance, could be come to. There was a talk of constituting what was then called a grand Ministry; it could not be done. After endless discussions, during which no one gave his inmost thoughts, of which craft rather than mutual enlightenment was the main feature, it was resolved that, universal suffrage being the weapon which the enemy had used to obtain his victory, it was this weapon that should be destroyed. A Bill to attenuate the effects of this essential disposition of the Constitution of 1848 was prepared in great haste.\*

Such was not the opinion of the Prince-President; but, his reluctance notwithstanding, he did not consider it opportune to oppose an idea with which the leaders of the majority seemed to be infatuated.

\* A Commission was appointed by M. Baroche, who had replaced M. Ferdinand Barrot at the Ministry of the Interior, to draft a Bill modifying the electoral law. This Commission was composed of MM. Benoist d'Azy, Berryer, Count Beugnot, Duke de Broglie, Buffet, Marquis de Chasseloup-Laubat, Léon Faucher, Jules de Lasteyrie, Count Molé, Count de Montalembert, Duke de Montebello, Piscatory, De Sèze, De Saint-Priest, Thiers, De Vatemesnil. Those were the honourable members of the Assembly, all worthy of consideration from their knowledge, experience, and probity, whom the Republicans of the time baptized with the name of "Burgraves."

He did not care to run the risk of breaking up this Conservative majority by his resistance; he allowed them to do as they pleased; and a Bill, which became law on the 31st May, was submitted to the Chamber.

To attain their ends, the leaders of the majority had placed themselves behind a barrier legally insurmountable—viz. the Articles 24 and 25 of the Constitution.

Article 24 provided, "That the suffrage is direct and universal."

Article 25 was conceived as follows: "Are electors, irrespective of the conditions of rental, all Frenchmen of twenty-one years of age and over, in possession of their civil and political rights."

But Article 27 lent itself to various interpretations. It ran: "The electoral law determines the causes that may deprive a French citizen of the right of election or of being elected."

The law of the 15th March, which fixed the term of residence necessary to the privileges of electorship at six months, was capable of modification. An examination of those various texts resulted in the conclusion that important modifications might be introduced to the composition of the electoral body without touching the Constitution. The nature of disqualification might be extended; a longer term of residence might equally be demanded. This dual arrangement was decided upon: the term of residence was extended to three years instead of six months. By this provision the new law eliminated nearly three millions of voters from the registration.

The Government had scarcely taken any part in the debates. In that way the Prince escaped the stigma of a measure he deemed inopportune and inconclusive; the responsibility of it fell wholly upon the Assembly—its most eminent members being, in fact, the sole authors of this law.\* M.

\* The Commission appointed by the standing committees to examine the Bill included, in fact, the greatest notabilities of the Assembly. It had



Léon Faucher, its reporter, had valiantly defended its merits against the orators of the Mountain and of the Moderate Left. In this grand debate the victory remained altogether with the leaders of the old parties. But it was either a bootless victory or a perilous gain, if ever there was one, as the future would show.

So true is it that no final legislation is possible in a society the restlessness of whose leading spirits, encouraged by the very principle of its government, continually tends to transform the situation of the country. The efficient law of one hour may become the dangerous one of the next; and it is thus that we shall see the law of the 31st May, in itself prudent and salutary, protective and opportune at the time of its promulgation, become a short time afterwards the source of serious complications.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE REVIEW AT SATORY.

The Assembly prorogued.—The Legitimists at Wiesbaden.—The Orleanists at Claremont.—Various party projects.—Fresh journey of the Prince-President.—His Speeches at Lyons, Rheims, and Caen.—The conditions of peace with the Assembly.—The Committee of Permanence.—The review at Satory.—The attitude of General Changarnier, his bulletins, his secret designs.—M. Odilon Barrot and General Changarnier.—What the General expected of M. Dupin.—New errors of the Chambers and their causes.

ALL the episodes relating to the law of the 31st May denoted the impotent desire of the old parties to shake off the yoke of the Elysée, to recover their independence, to march henceforth each

been taken in part from among the Commission called the "Burgraves," of which we have spoken already. It was composed as follows:—MM. the Duke de Broglie, president, Léon Faucher, secretary, Baze, Berryer, Bocher, Brinvilliers, Combarel de Leyval, Jules de Lasteyrie, de Laussedat, de l'Espinasse, Léon de Malleville, de Montigny, Piscatory, General de Saint-Priest, de Vatemésnil.



towards its aim—the restoration of their princes. From the 31st May to the 11th August, the date fixed for a three months' vacation of the Assembly, the sittings only offered a secondary interest compared with the stormy days of great debates. The progress of a marked ill-will towards the Prince might be distinctly noticed, however: a petition for an increase of grant was only voted after a painful waste of talk, and by a small majority.\* General Changarnier, while giving the Government the benefit of his countenance, took his leave, as it were, from and severed the alliance he seemed to have contracted with the Elysée. His attitude, rather nebulous on this occasion, was to become more clear very shortly. That of the other parties was also to become more significant. The masks were about to be thrown off.

In fact, scarcely had the Chamber separated but the Legitimist party got up a manifestation which assumed all the proportions of an event. The Count de Chambord had been drawing nearer to France; he had for the moment taken up his residence at Wiesbaden; and his most faithful friends first, after them a goodly number of his partisans, went to pay him their respects and the assurance of their devotion. The organs of the party carefully published a list of the visitors, and

\* Throughout his Presidential as well as Imperial career, Napoleon III. was often very cruelly embarrassed. Though himself very simple, he loved to travel in state and to scatter money with a liberal hand. His generosity was proverbial. His Civil List of £24,000 a year as President, and that of £1,600,000 as Emperor, was therefore never sufficient. One day, on the eve of the very journey alluded to in this chapter, after a Cabinet Council, the Prince took a couple of five-franc pieces from his pocket, and jingling them playfully together in the presence of his Ministers, he said with a smile: "There, that is all I have left for to-morrow's trip." M. Ferdinand Barrot saw the painful situation through the joke, and borrowed 10,000 francs from a friend, which he placed in gold on the President's dressing-table the same evening. The next afternoon the Prince had not a penny left of it. It was spent in subscriptions to local charities. Neither MM. Thiers, Gambetta, nor Grévy would have ever thought of doing such a thing; but Marshal MacMahon would.—*Trans.*

kept up the zeal of their adherents. A kind of census was made; and in their select assemblies it went as far as deliberation. The foremost question that invited discussion in those palavers of the leaders of the party was to define their attitude in the event of a fresh insurrectionary movement being provoked by the Mountain. It was thought that in such a contingency every dynastic question would be reopened, and they wished to be prepared to take advantage of possible complications. Generally speaking, it may be said that the friends of M. de Chambord were divided into two camps—that of action and that of discreet passiveness. The former fancied themselves able to boast an infallible element of success, of first-rate importance surely: it was the eventual support, or, to speak by the card, the complicity of General Changarnier. General Changarnier had given to at least one of the specially authorized Legitimist deputies the most explicit assurance of his devotion to the cause of the Count de Chambord. The General had not minced matters; he had clearly expressed his resolution not to favour the supposed designs of the Prince-President; he had declared that, if wanted, he would place his sword at the disposal of Legitimacy.\* The Republic was on its death-bed. In his opinion the triumph of the good cause was at hand, and presented not so many difficulties as it was supposed to do. It was but natural that such a confidence should breed in the mind of him who received it some zealous projects. The Legitimist deputy warmly insisted upon measures being taken for action at the decisive moment; he advocated a bolder and more assertive policy, that might tend to hasten a solution. His opinion went for nought in the councils of M. de Chambord.

\* The deputy in question is the Marquis de la Rochejacquelin. It is from that nobleman's own lips that we have the statement with regard to General Changarnier. On several occasions we had the opportunity of conversing with him on this subject. His recollections were exceedingly precise.

Nevertheless it was decided that, without going ahead as quickly as the confidant of General Changarnier wished, things should be got ready in view of possible events, and that in no case support should be given to any measure that might engage the future and pave the way for the elevation of the Prince-President to the throne. The Legitimist party became more militant than it had been in the past. Taken as a whole, it did not conspire, but it watched events more closely than it had done hitherto; it still remained attached to the Conservative party, but only by such slight ties as offered a benefit to its own cause. The Government of Louis Napoleon could only count upon a limited and essentially conditional co-operation.

The Orleanist party also had its manifestation. A melancholy event had been its natural cause: King Louis Philippe died at Claremont, and a great number of important personages repaired to his funeral. As a matter of course, such a gathering could not well separate without discussing the events of which France was then and still might become the scene. The Orleans princes, a great number of former Ministers, and members of the Assembly, being thus brought together, discussion followed, and they examined the advantages to be taken of circumstances. At Claremont, as at Wiesbaden, various opinions confronted each other. Some proposed to combine the forces of the two branches of the House of Bourbon, to bring about a reconciliation between the Count de Chambord and the princes: it was the nascent idea of the fusion.\* Others looked upon the mere idea to restore the monarchy, under no matter whatsoever form, as fraught with peril; they considered that for the present it was better not to overthrow the Republic. Their plan offered apparently fewer

\* Which, in February, 1884, is not an accomplished fact yet, and probably never will be. The influence of the Count de Chambord's theory of divine right is as great a bar now as it was during his lifetime.—*Trans.*

serious difficulties than that of a restoration. It confined itself to make the revision of the Constitution impossible, and, Prince Louis Napoleon not being re-eligible, to bring forward in 1852 the Prince de Joinville as a candidate for the Presidency of the Republic. The well-known liberal opinions of the Prince de Joinville would, it was hoped, rally the Moderate Republicans to his cause. The Conservatives of no particular shade would willingly accept him ; and, the Orleanists aiding, a strong party might be constituted that would offer a solid guarantee to the men of order, and could with advantage oppose the candidate of the Mountain. Again, at Claremont as at Wiesbaden, the co-operation of General Changarnier was counted upon, if not as a candidate of a restoration by force, at least as an energetic adversary of any and every attempt of Prince Louis Napoleon to get possession himself of the supreme power by virtue of a final title.

From the point of view of the ancient great party of order, of that which had protested against the Republican candidates of the 10th March, and had contributed to the election of Prince Louis Napoleon, this arrangement might be considered as another defection of a big battalion.

The Prince-President watched, without troubling himself about them, those natural manœuvres of the old parties in search of a crown. He was conscious of his own strength, though he did not despise the means of increasing it. In 1849 he had made a triumphal journey through the western provinces ; he resolved to put himself once more in communication with those populations that had elected him. It was Lyons and the eastern parts that he went to visit in 1850.

Again he found in his speeches the means of confirming his principles, to reply to the attacks of which he had been the object, as well as to the manifestations directed against his present and

future power. This was his mode of defence; and none that produced a deeper impression upon the country at large could be found. Every one admitted that the situation was becoming unbearable and could last no longer. The Mountain openly conspired; the Legitimist and Orleanist parties were getting their batteries into position. The Elysée was like a besieged citadel: its assault was being prepared. The Prince loyally warned his enemies that he was resolved to defend himself.

At Lyons, on the 15th August, in his reply to the speech of the Mayor, the Prince said: "If culpable pretensions were revived once more, and threatened to endanger the tranquillity of France, I should know how to reduce them by invoking again the sovereign will of the country; because I deny any one the right to call himself her representative more than I am."

It was a direct response to the manifestations at Wiesbaden and at Claremont, and to the plans which had leaked out. By thus proclaiming that he would again invoke the sovereign will of the people, the Prince made no mystery whatsoever of his intentions. He clearly indicated his method of defence. It was the appeal to the nation; it was without disguise the announcement of the 2nd December, in the event of the coalesced parties compelling him to have recourse to this extreme measure.

But, at the same time that he showed himself ready for the struggle, he showed his persistent preference for a pacific solution. Inviting the parties that threatened to break the strength of the Conservative union to conciliation, he said at Rheims: "Our country's only desire is towards order, religion, and prudent liberty. I have been able to convince myself that everywhere the number of agitators is infinitely small and the number of good citizens infinitely great. Let us pray to Heaven that they may not be divided! It is because of this that when



I find myself to-day in this ancient city of Rheims, whither Kings, who also had the interests of nations at heart, came to be crowned, I could wish to see an idea crowned, instead of a man—the idea of union and conciliation, the triumph of which would bring tranquillity back to our country, already so great by her riches, her virtues, and her faith.”

At Caen the Prince again expressed his hopes for a peaceful and lawful solution of the pending difficulties. As he had done elsewhere, he clearly indicated the means of deliverance—the constitutional means of prolonging and strengthening his power. “If,” he said, “stormy days were to come again, and the nation wished to impose a new burden on the chief of the Government, that chief would be very guilty to desert this high trust.”

The revision of the Constitution, the right to re-elect the President of the Republic, the appeal to the people—such was the programme of Louis Napoleon; such were his clear conditions of peace, those with whose triumph he was entrusted during the splendid reception that awaited him. It was the duty of the Chamber to take note of such language, to accept those repeated statements, to comprehend whither the persistence of the country was tending. If the Chamber prepared, as it were, the aggression by its continued resistance, by its persistent pursuit of the chimerical triumph of impossible restorations, by its contemplated threatening attitude, it knew the resolves to which its conduct compelled the Prince. By simply reading the speech of Lyons over again it knew beforehand the fate in store for it. Between the Chamber and the Prince the nation would be called upon to judge.

At its separation on the 11th August the Chamber had left behind, as it were, a living proof of its dispositions towards the Prince. In its Committee of Permanence it had united both the most important and mistrustful individualities of the Assembly. Generals Changarnier, Lamoricière, and de Laures-



ton, MM. Thiers, Berryer, de Lasteyrie, de Saint-Priest, Count Beugnot, Chambolle belonged to this Commission. Its mission may easily be guessed: it was to attentively watch the doings and sayings of the Prince, and to convoke the Assembly at the slightest sign of danger. The journey of Louis Napoleon, his speeches, the receptions he had met with everywhere—this kind of anticipated greeting of a more stable power had aroused most disagreeable sensations among the Committee. But what could they do or say? The Prince remained absolutely correct in his language; he respected the Constitution; the interpretation he gave to it had nothing seditious. At the utmost he could only be charged with being too generous a player; for he showed his adversaries every card of his game.

The day came, though, when the apprehensions of the Committee of Permanence were still further startled. We must refer to the occasion, because the incident that provoked those fears is also the date of the final rupture between the Prince and General Changarnier. The influence that resulted from this shock need not be insisted on.

On the 10th October the Prince was to review some regiments at Satory. A whole fabric of conjectures had been built upon the event. It was said that that day would witness the solution of the problem: the troops were to salute Louis Napoleon with the title of Emperor, and conduct the new sovereign in triumph to the Tuileries. Surely it was a feasible project; and though the possibility of it by no means tempted the Prince, it caused the Committee some cruel nightmares. On the eventful day part of its members repaired to Satory, accompanied by a certain number of representatives eager to support the moral authority of their colleagues by their presence. The precaution proved wholly superfluous. The review went off like the others; the Prince was greeted with the cries of "Vive Napoléon!" and "Vive l'Empereur!" by the

army and an immense concourse of spectators, who crowded the level of Satory—attracted less by the spectacle of the military manœuvres than by the hope of being present at some great political transfiguration.

In the march-past a contrast that was not customary had been noticed, though, between the attitude of the cavalry and that of a part of the infantry. The former had hailed the Prince-President with increased excitement; several regiments of the latter went by observing a rigorous silence. Whence came this difference, altogether new? It was known that those very regiments which thus remained mute entertained the most cordial feeling towards the Prince. Had orders been given to that effect, and by whom? The Prince naturally wished to clear up this mystery. An inquiry was set afoot; but before it had proceeded very far it was elicited that General Neumayer, the *alter ego* of General Changarnier, had enjoined several colonels to order their regiments to observe a rigorous silence during the march-past. This order had been strictly obeyed; hence the cause of the silence of the infantry regiments.

But in this instance General Neumayer could only be considered the interpreter of the commands of his chief, whose devoted friend he was. Consequently it was to General Changarnier, then, that really belonged the responsibility of the silence of the infantry regiments. But why this change of tactics on the part of the Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Paris? At all the previous reviews—and they had been numerous—the troops had cheered the Prince-President in his presence; all the regiments without exception had marched past to the cries of “Vive Napoléon!” and often to those of “Vive l’Empereur!” Might it not be taken for granted that similar manifestations had at least the assent of the Commander-in-Chief of the Army? It was impossible to doubt it after reading the bulletins of the General

complimenting his troops at every important review upon their excellent spirit and martial bearing. The excellent spirit to which he alluded could be, and in fact was, nothing else but the proof of devotion to Louis Napoleon, so openly manifested. Those congratulations at the lips of General Changarnier, were they not the distinct approval of the cheers that had greeted the Prince-President? Were not they at the same time an encouragement to the troops to continue to show "the excellent spirit" on subsequent occasions? Whence this sudden turning round on the part of General Changarnier? We shall soon be able to say—or rather he will say it for us; facts will speak for themselves, and show the truth in the most brilliant light.

However, if the review at Satory had disappointed the people that crowded thither, if it had given the lie to the journals hostile to the Elysée, who had noisily heralded the *Coup d'État* as the certain sequel to this military display, it had also two other grave results. On the one hand, it had conclusively enlightened the Prince with regard to General Changarnier's true feelings towards him—on the attitude he meant to take up. It had dictated the Chief of the State the resolutions that would uphold his authority. On the other hand, it had caused so great an excitement, so profound a feeling of irritation amongst the members of the Committee of Permanence, that the day became, as it were, the starting-point of a rupture between the Legislative Power and the Executive.

The pilgrimages to Wiesbaden and Claremont were bearing fruit. General Changarnier had passed his Rubicon. He was not long in initiating the whole of the country to the motives of his new attitude. In consequence of the review at Satory, General Neumayer's staff appointment had been changed into a command in the provinces. But however enviable such a position might still be, the Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Paris per-

sisted in regarding it as the blame for what had occurred at the review at Satory, as a slight upon his authority. He did not delay his answer. On the 2nd November, 1850, he published a bulletin reminding the troops under his command that they "must abstain from all manifestations and cries when in the ranks." In ordinary times such an order would have been natural enough; under the present circumstances it became a political act, a downright declaration of war. Nor was the attitude of General Changarnier in the Committee of Permanence less hostile. During a discussion between himself and General d'Hautpoul, the Minister for War, General Changarnier had clearly shown the part he henceforth intended to take. He became the general of the Assembly, the armed adversary of the Prince-President, the executor of the ambitions of the Monarchical parties, or, to speak more correctly, the eventual executor of his personal designs.

An incident which becomes exceedingly grave, as much from the facts it reveals as from the guarantee to its truth from an eminent and loyal personage, initiates us to the secret thoughts of the Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Paris. He shows him to us openly plotting against the government and against the personal liberty of the Prince. Later on, we shall have to call in support of our proofs, unimpeachable in themselves, this free and spontaneous evidence of one of the most tenacious adversaries of the Empire and the Emperor from 1850 to 1870. Let us hear what M. Odilon Barrot says, in one of the most instructive pages of his "*Mémoires*."\*

"I was staying at Mortefontaine," says M. Odilon Barrot, "when M. de Pontalba, an aide-de-camp of General Changarnier, brought me a note from this general, in which he implored me to come to Paris.

\* "*Mémoires Posthumes de M. Odilon Barrot*." Charpentier, libraire-éditeur. Tome iv., p. 60, line 15.

“‘Matters are becoming exceedingly grave,’ he wrote; ‘your presence is absolutely necessary.’ I thought that the critical moment had come, and did not hesitate. The post-chaise which had brought M. de Pontalba took us back to Paris, where we arrived about midnight. . . .

“‘As the ball may be opened at any moment,’ said the General to me, ‘I have taken the liberty of drawing you out of your hole. It is a toss-up who shall take the initiative—I or Louis Napoleon.’

“‘But have you made sure of the co-operation of the Prefect of Police?’ I asked the General.

“‘Oh, I am sure of Carlier’ (the Prefect of Police); ‘I can rely on him,’ said the General. . . . In answer to my straightforward question whether he had taken his measures to arrest the President, he said *that I had but to give him the order, and he would put him in the ‘salad basket’* [prison-van, the French colloquial term for our English ‘Black Maria’] *to take him without further ado to Vincennes.*”

And M. Odilon Barrot adds:

“Seeing that I objected, and pointed out to the General that Carlier’s first step would be to go and report this conversation to Louis Napoleon, and perhaps offer to render him the same service with the General, the latter’s aide-de-camp, Valazé, replied—‘So much the better; we are all very glad that they should know at the Elysée what we intend to do.’”

And if the reader wishes to know the conditions under which the General intended to consummate his revolt against the Chief of the State, how he intended to give the conspiracy of which he was the soul and the sword a semblance of legality, M. Odilon Barrot will tell us again:

“Nevertheless,” continues M. Barrot, “I observed to the General that things had come to such a pass that the crisis could be protracted no longer. ‘For what are you waiting to put an end to it?’ ‘Oh,’



he answered, 'I am only waiting for Dupin's signature.'"

We need not insist upon the new light thrown on the situation by such a sentence. If we behold General Changarnier impatient to possess himself of the supreme power, we also see the zealots of the majority group themselves around him as accomplices. M. Dupin's situation became more and more critical. Badgered, driven out of his wits by the members of the Committee of Permanence, he had shown a prudent reserve. He had not wished to break with those whom he considered to be dangerous conspirators, because the rupture would have led to their taking for President one of their own, who would have lent himself to their designs. He made it his business to gain time; and to temporise was to show prudence. Consequently he had neither promised nor refused; he had simply deferred this famous signature, which in his inmost heart he was resolved never to give.

After such crushing evidence, will those whom neither time nor events have enlightened, who have remained our irreconcilable adversaries, will they still dare to indulge their bitter recriminations? This *Coup d'État*, the recollection of which is sufficient to make them roar with indignation—"how," say they, "has any one been perverted enough to conceive the idea of it, sufficiently criminal to dare execute it?" Let them not come to us to be told. Let them consult at random the evidence of those that still remain of what were the leaders of the majority of those days. Above all, let them listen to him whom they chose as their leader, and whose language I have just quoted. They will be compelled to admit that they also wanted a *Coup d'État*—of course for their special benefit. They wanted it as we wanted it; they wanted it before we did. If they did not attempt it, it was not because their scruples prevented them, but because they lacked confidence in their success and resolution.



Those, and those only, are the true reasons of their respect for the Constitution, got up for the occasion and from sheer necessity. Let them, therefore, no longer parade their tardy love for a fatal legality, the very shackles of which they did all in their power to shake off. Light has been let in upon the reality of their designs ; their accusations and injuries are nothing more to-day than the recriminations of the defeated, still angry at having been forestalled in their attack, surprised in their preparations, and overthrown in spite of their desperate efforts at resistance. In the great law-suit which they prefer against the 2nd December before the tribunal of history, the dual and crushing evidence of M. Odilon Barrot and General Changarnier is in itself sufficient to ensure their condemnation.

But in this ardent, passionate struggle, in this desperate combat which the ambitious and most impatient of the majority forced upon the Chief of the State, how blind must they have been to believe for one instant in the success of their plans ! What could have been the causes that betrayed a considerable group of eminent and experienced men into such an error ?

Twice the same cause had bred the same illusions ; twice this selfsame Palais-Bourbon, the seat of the Assembly, had witnessed the birth of the same error of judgment with regard to the real state of the country. In 1848 the Constituent Assembly firmly believed in the election of General Cavaignac, and the General sustained a crushing defeat. In 1850 the Legislative Assembly believed that its authority would sway the power of the Prince-President, and the future had an equally bitter disappointment in store for it. It is because at both those periods those who impelled the Chambers allowed themselves to be too exclusively swayed by the ardour of their hopes. They complacently yielded to the influence of the apostles

of their idea, of those folk of good faith to whom the wish is father to the thought ; they set too great a value on what the press said, on the daily rumours of the political world ; and, in their more intimate gatherings communicating to each other their impressions, their news, and their appreciations, they ended by creating for themselves a fictitious truth, the fruitful source of all errors. Amidst all their agitations they lived, as it were, a kind of comparatively isolated existence.

One may sometimes isolate one's self with impunity in the interest of abstract studies, and amid such solitary meditations, or amid an intimate and select communion, discover the solution of some philosophical problem. Even then the mind will gain from its contact with the world certain stimulants which aid reflection and enable it to discover entirely new horizons. A word may start an idea, a contradiction may dispel an error ; labour incessantly pursued, even among those who seem to divert one from it, finds in its intellectual exchanges the most precious benefits. But when man pretends to participate in the political direction of the State, when he is placed sufficiently high for his counsel, his word, and his action to exercise a preponderant influence on the destinies of his country, whether the latter accepts or rejects it, such a mission imposes different duties and compels a more active existence. In such cases deep reflection is not enough ; individual light is but an imperfect element. The science of the past itself, this guide of the policy of all ages, only becomes a useful aid on the express condition of applying the lessons it yields in a thoroughly judicious and carefully considered manner. The teaching of history becomes a source of danger or of benefit, according to its interpretation. Comparisons elucidate ; too strenuous imitation often proves a perilous stumbling-block. To extract from an intellectual storehouse all the benefits that may be expected from it, the

study of the present must be combined with the lessons of the past. We must seek our inspirations, our guidance, our rule of conduct, in the careful examination of public opinion, in the just appreciation of the evolutions of the public mind. As much as intercommunion aids the discovery of the true, as much does the concentration of existence within the self-same atmosphere fatally lead to obstinacy and self-willed conclusions.

Those leaders of parties, those theorists of the fallen régimes, only breathed the vitiated atmosphere of the precincts of the Chamber; they could not thus fortify their minds and raise them to the level of the exigencies of the moment. The Prince, on the contrary, in his peregrinations across France deeply breathed of the vivifying air of our rural districts; he gathered strength from it and confirmed his belief. He thus went in search of truth at her surest founts, without waiting to have its garbled reflects merely brought to him. And it was because of this, because of those differences in their political lives, that the Chamber was in error and the Prince within the truth.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### GENERAL CHANGARNIER REVOKED.

Message of the 12th November; its effect.—Interpellation of the 3rd January, 1851.—Meeting of the Leaders of the Majority at the Elysée.—Rupture.—General Changarnier revoked.—Effect produced on the Assembly.—*Mot* of M. Thiers.—The Ministry resigns.—Difficulties of forming a new Cabinet.—Transition Ministry of the 24th January.—Interpellation of M. Hovyn-Tranchère.—Petition for an increased Civil List.—Refusal of the Chamber.—Fresh attempts to constitute a Parliamentary Ministry.—Neither a day nor a crown-piece.—M. Odilon Barrot's opinion of the Leaders of the Majority.

PUBLIC opinion was very justly getting uneasy at the antagonism that existed in the higher regions of the State. The journals of all shades announced

the revocation of General Changarnier as an imminent contingency. The organs devoted to the Prince's interest zealously recommended the measure. The excitement had spread to the provinces, and a great number of prefects called the attention of the Government to the necessity of tolerating no longer at the head of the Army of Paris a general who so openly assumed a hostile attitude towards the Chief of the State.

Why was general expectation disappointed? Why did not the Prince profit by the opportunity which the Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Paris had given him to make an end of a situation which on all sides was deemed intolerable? To hope for a reconciliation with General Changarnier was an illusion not to be indulged for a moment; to spare the Assembly the slight which the disgrace of its supposed and devoted protector would produce was a piece of bootless Quixotism. The moment to strike had apparently come; and still the Prince held his hand. Practical minds then began to think that he committed an error in needlessly protracting and embittering a struggle which might lead to the most formidable complications against the peace of the country.

In attempting to sketch the character of the Prince, we have already pointed out, but we must repeat, that his personal inclinations leant less to energetic resolves than has ever been supposed. He did not shrink from them when their necessity had been pointed out; but it was a peculiarity of his character to exhaust all methods of conciliation, though he expected little from them, before taking decisive measures. On this occasion he yielded to his personal inspirations, and, to the great astonishment of the Chamber, and of General Changarnier himself, did not deprive the latter of his command of the Army of Paris. He wished to make a last effort to restore concord, at any rate, between the Assembly and the Executive.

The 12th was the date fixed for the opening of the Chamber. At its reassembling the Prince addressed it in a Message breathing a lofty spirit of conciliation. He had faith in the power of his words; he felt convinced that loyal explanations might even at that moment efface the signs of discord that was becoming so embittered; he felt himself so strong, so powerful, so absolutely master of the situation, supported as he was by the almost unanimous goodwill of the nation, that he refused to think the Assembly would push its resistance to the bitter end. He did not wish to crush it; he wished to conquer it. All lawful means remained still open to solve the formidable problems whence depended the saving of the country; he was obstinately bound to appeal to them. He persisted in believing that the Chamber, tired of an unequal struggle, would at last recognise its want of power to accomplish anything without him, and that, yielding to the pressure of the country, it would vote the revision of the Constitution, and thus inaugurate the era of pacific solutions. It was under the influence of those generous illusions that the Prince, in his Message of the 12th November to the Assembly, said:—

“In proportion to the fears for the present disappearing, the preoccupations for the future will become the greater. Still, France is above all desirous of repose. Scarcely recovered from her emotions from the dangers society has run, she remains outside the quarrels of parties and of individuals—so petty when compared with the interests at stake.

“Whenever I have had occasion to express my thoughts in public I have always declared that I look upon those who from personal motives of ambition would endanger the little stability the Constitution guarantees as very criminal indeed. This is my profound and unshaken conviction. Only the enemies of public tranquillity could have



misconstrued the most simple proceedings necessitated by my position.

“As the Chief Magistrate of Republic I was obliged to put myself into communication with the clergy, the magistracy, the peasantry, the industry, the administration, and the army. I have striven from the first to seize every opportunity to show them my sympathy and gratitude for their co-operation. And if it be true that my name and my efforts have contributed to raise the spirit of the army—of which, according to the terms of the Constitution, *I alone dispose*—then I am proud to say that I believe to have served the country; for I have ever used my personal influence in the interest of public tranquillity.”

And farther on the Prince added: “A considerable number of the Councils-General have expressed their wish for the revision of the Constitution. This wish solely concerns the Legislative Power. As for me, elected by the people, deriving my authority from them only, I shall always conform to their wishes, if lawfully expressed. The uncertainty of the future has, I know, given rise to many apprehensions, has awakened many hopes. Let us all try to sacrifice those hopes to the country, and only occupy ourselves with her welfare. If in this session you vote the revision of the Constitution, a Constituent Assembly will be called to remodel our fundamental laws, and to regulate the attributes of the Executive Power. If you do not vote it, the people will solemnly express their will again in 1852. But whatever the solutions with regard to the future may be, let us endeavour to understand each other.” The Prince wound up his message by these noble words:—“I have loyally opened my heart to you; you will respond to my candour by your confidence, to my good intentions by your co-operation; and God will do the rest.”

All the questions that preoccupied the country



and the Assembly had been loyally confronted by the Prince. Proudly defying the threats of the various parties, he explained by one word, by the confirmation of his rights, the motive of his forbearance towards General Changarnier; he showed the proper construction to be placed on his journeys; he urgently showed the Chamber the constitutional way to avoid all collision with the country; he finally, in the most glowing terms, made an appeal to concord, and in the loftiest language gave the Assembly a startling lesson in patriotism.

The Message of the Prince made a considerable impression on the Assembly. The situation appeared less strained, and the Prince might for a moment indulge the hope that he had gained his purpose—the understanding between the great parties, and a solution of the difficulties through their agreement. But the suspicions were too deeply rooted, too many had an interest in keeping them up, for the disarmament to be of long duration; a single incident might prove sufficient to revive them. The incident occurred on the 3rd January. A journal published various bulletins of General Changarnier which appeared to show a contradiction between his language of 1849 and that of 1850. An interpellation on the subject was made in the Chamber; and the latter, called upon, as it were, to declare itself for or against the Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Paris, openly took sides with him. Under the particular circumstances this expression of confidence caused a twofold effect: General Changarnier was praised and the Prince-President tacitly censured in one blow. It was the crisis.

The Prince was bound to pick up the gauntlet thrown him by both the Assembly and General Changarnier. He resolved to act, and took a Ministry whose express mission was the revocation of the Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Paris.

The new Ministry was composed as follows :—

MM. REGNAUD DE SAINT-JEAN D'ANGELY, War.

DROUYN DE LHUYS, Foreign Affairs.

BAROCHE, Interior.

FOULD, Finances.

DUCOS, Marine.

ROUHER, Justice.

MAGNE, Public Works.

BONJEAN, Commerce.

But previous to carrying out his plan, the Prince wished to afford an explanation of it to the leaders of the majority. The 8th January he convoked a meeting at the Elysée of MM. Thiers, Odilon Barrot, Count Molé, Count Daru, Berryer, Duke de Broglie, Count Montalembert, and Dupin. He informed them of his decision, and of the circumstances that compelled it; he spoke not only to those who were present, but through them to the Chamber, where he wished his intentions to be presented in their true light. But matters had gone too far: the Prince succeeded neither in making his listeners share the feeling to which he was compelled to yield, nor to obtain from them the assurance that they would assist him in a policy of conciliation with the Assembly. The meeting separated without much bitterness, but no one disguised the fact that the time of a rupture between the Prince and the Assembly drew nigh.

The next day, the 9th January, the ordinance that placed General Changarnier on non-activity and appointed General Baraguay d'Hilliers as his successor appeared in the *Moniteur*. The same ordinance provided—"that General Carrelet, commanding the First Military Division, shall continue the exercise of the command that devolves upon him pursuant to the laws in actual operation." The General of Division, Perrot, was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the National Guards of the Seine.

Such was to be the fatal but natural upshot of

the daring conspiracy of General Changarnier against the Chief of the State. The pains the General had taken to win over the officers of his army, to obtain the confidence of the Chamber and of the Paris population, had placed him in a position by which at a given moment he might have set himself up as the arbiter of the destinies of France. More than once he had been urged to do so; nor did he want the inclination. But he felt caught in the net he had woven for himself. As long as he remained the mere plotter, he held in his hand the solution of three problems, betwixt any of which he might choose. This was his strength. But the day he made up his mind to emerge from the shadow of conspiracy into the light of action he was equally bound to decide in favour of one only. To replace the Prince, impounded at Vincennes, by Legitimacy, Orleanism, or himself, would necessarily shatter the threefold support of his fragile power, and civil war would have been the sole result of his enterprise. We have to look no farther than this for the reason of the General's protracted hesitations and for his final want of action. His ambition, however great, had not wholly obscured his understanding. To the peril of failure he preferred momentary submission, whilst still promising to himself the revenge of his defeat at some future day. The absence of the insignia of command would not make his intrigues against the Chief of the State less dangerous. If he lost the power inseparable from his high command, he found in his unfettered liberty some signal compensations. If he ceased to be the general of Louis Napoleon he became the general of the Assembly. On the 3rd January it had solemnly invested him with this mission; in its present attitude and resolutions he was to find a fresh and tumultuous consecration of his mandate.

After the 10th January the Assembly, which felt itself struck by the blow aimed at General Chan-

garnier, had fiercely picked up the gauntlet and openly assailed the Executive Power. On a great number of benches of the majority the attack took this time a direct form. Outpost skirmishes were done with; the Chamber was incited to an energetic resistance; and M. Thiers, one of the most violent aggressors, finished his speech by the *mot*, become famous since, "The Empire is a virtual fact."

"There are moments," said M. Thiers in a burst of singular candour, "there are moments when fears may be entertained for the safety of the supreme power. To-day public opinion is tending towards the supreme power; no fears need be felt for its safety. There is nothing to confront it but the Assembly, which, after all, possesses but a moral influence. If it gives in, there is an end of it; it disappears, and there remains only one power. After the fact itself the name will come when it is wanted. *L'Empire est fait\** (the Empire is a virtual fact)." What, then, was the powerful motive that impelled M. Thiers to so violently oppose a power towards which he clearly saw that "public opinion is tending"? A sad spectacle, indeed, was this Chamber in the last throes of agony, ruined by its intestine dissensions. Powerless to combine for good, it could only unite for evil; it gathered up its last shreds of authority to overthrow the only power that could save the country and itself at the same time. General Changarnier, instead of leaving to others the eulogy of his work, though they had not been behindhand, thought it incumbent upon himself to bring his own apology to the tribune. He placed his sword at the disposal of the Chamber, and the bargain was ratified once more by acclamations and by a triple salvo of plaudits.

The Ministry had done its duty in this desperate

\* There was no possibility of translating the phrase otherwise than I have done. Neither the words "The Empire is a virtual fact," nor "The Empire is made," produce the same effect in English of their equivalents in French.—*Trans.*

struggle, which for three consecutive days had thrown the country into a state of unnecessary excitement; it had valiantly pledged its own responsibility in order to shield the Prince; it had received the full force of the blow aimed at the Elysée. On the 18th January the Ministry tendered its resignation, and in exchange for his lost command General Changarnier could boast the platonic satisfaction of having caused the fall of a Cabinet.

The order of the day that overthrew the Ministry was carried by 417 votes, as against 278. It read as follows: "The Assembly declares that it has no confidence in the Ministry, and proceeds to the order of the day." It was drawn up by the Left. Such laconism proved once more how the internal divisions of the Chamber had limited its action. If it could still find a majority to destroy, it was absolutely incapable of finding one to construct. For instance, the majority had been unable to agree among themselves upon any order of the day that emanated from itself; and to accomplish the overthrow of the Ministry it had been obliged to suffer the humiliation of accepting from the Left, and as the price of the latter's co-operation, the order of the day that had been voted. It was its first punishment.

This want of power to constitute a majority of the Right made the formation of a Parliamentary Cabinet impossible. Every combination fell through at the very start. Each group had its list; but all those lists were so many appeals for war, and no one cared to make war for the benefit of his neighbour.

If the Prince at that time had been resolved upon a *Coup d'État*, he could not have found, either before the country herself or before history, a more ample justification of his enterprise than those three days of discussion, during which the Chamber had indulged the most violent aggressions against him. We can but notice once more his evident



preference for a pacific solution; he never gave a more startling proof of it. Whilst the Chamber prepared for battle, with the knowledge of having rendered it inevitable, whilst the journals of all shades announced an imminent arming for the fray, the Prince alone clung to conciliation and peace. Among the parties, who wanted, some the Legitimate Monarchy, others a kind of fancy Monarchy with one of the Orleans Princes, others still a dictatorship with General Changarnier, and finally the Republicans, who wanted all kinds of Republics, there was a small number of men, more reasonable than their fellows, who without feeling disposed to subscribe to all the plans attributed to the Prince, nevertheless considered his overthrow an impossible enterprise. Those latter would have resigned themselves to the prolongation of the Prince's powers, on the sole condition of his giving them some part in the Government of the country—not necessarily as a guarantee, but rather as a personal satisfaction. M. Odilon Barrot was the chief of this small fraction. It was M. Barrot for whom the Prince-President sent. He bade him try to form a Cabinet of conciliation, and more specially one of revision and pacific solution.

M. Odilon Barrot was very near coming to an understanding with the Prince. He consented to remodel the law of the 31st May, he professed himself able, thanks to this concession to the Left, to obtain from it the additional support necessary to the carrying of the revision of the Constitution; finally, he himself offered the Prince the prolongation of his powers, sure as he felt of the will of the nation to endorse the offer. To all this he added but one condition—a little more submission to the constitutional doctrines than had been shown in the past. One might say that an understanding had been arrived at, at any rate between the Prince and M. Barrot; it merely wanted the leaders of the majority to establish it between the Prince and the



Chamber. In this way matters would have progressed very rapidly, and by legal means, towards the result which the Prince was afterwards compelled to ask from an act of authority, owing to the obstinacy and wilful blindness of some of the wire-pullers of the Chamber.

The opposition of the Monarchists having made the formation of the Barrot Ministry impossible, the Prince recovered his freedom of action: he could take back his own Ministry, composed of moderate men, and which counted some first-rate orators among its members. He was advised to do so; but it meant the continuation of the struggle, and once more he wished to give the Chamber proofs of his pacific intentions. Still, he could not go so far as to give his most violent adversaries, the Leaders of the Majority, the satisfaction which they had the presumption to expect from their victory. A disappointment was in store for them. In fact, what was their surprise when the *Moniteur* of the 24th January announced the formation of a Ministry taken wholly outside the Chamber!

This Ministry was composed as follows:—

MM. DE ROYER, Justice.

GENERAL RANDON, War.

ADMIRAL VAILLANT, Marine.

VAÏSSE, Interior.

DE GERMINY, Finances.

BARON BRENIER, Foreign Affairs.

MAGNE, Public Works.

SCHNEIDER, Commerce.

GIRAUD, Public Education.

The announcement of the formation of this new Ministry was, as it were, the olive-branch held out by the Prince to the Assembly. Time was wanted to restore tranquillity; it could be only arrived at by devotion to business, and not by the irritation of useless struggles. The Elysée offered a truce; the Chamber declined it.

Scarcely had the new Ministers taken their seats than war was declared against them. M. Hovyn-Tranchère interpellated the Ministry on the conditions of its formation, and on its policy. After the long and too recent debates of the Changarnier incident, little now remained to be said; the subject was exhausted. Consequently the discussion was more than lukewarm; it led to no significant result, and only supplied M. de Royer with the opportunity for a short but telling maiden speech. In a few eloquent and dignified sentences the Keeper of the Seals avenged the Cabinet for the affected contempt of its adversaries; he showed that he was a man to be reckoned with, however short-lived his own share of public affairs might be. But the attitude of the Chamber became threatening. Illusion was no longer possible: it had evidently made up its mind to resort to extremes; it was resolved to let no opportunity pass to thwart the Presidential authority. Under those conditions, the Prince was not debarred from giving his adversaries "plenty of rope wherewith to hang themselves." It was not only clever strategy on his part; it would at the same time hasten a solution by means natural and appreciable to every one. Nor is it doing the Prince an injury to suspect him of knowingly leading a forlorn hope when he made his Ministry ask for an increase of his Civil List, even if he knew that such a refusal would only increase the want of popularity of the Assembly. Besides, a supplementary salary had become imperative, from the absolute lack of funds at the Elysée; hence, whatever the motive, he felt compelled to apply to the Assembly. Nothing was more legitimate than such a request; the insufficiency of the allowance of the President of the Republic being nowhere more candidly recognized than at the Palais-Bourbon.

We have said it at the outset of these pages—one cannot change in a day the habits, customs, and

traditions of a nation. Such a metamorphosis is not accomplished by Act of Parliament. Royalty may be abolished by a revolutionary edict: to efface its traces, to stifle its memories, to obliterate its benefits, long and terrible efforts are needed. And how very vain such efforts often are! We witness those that are made at the present to divorce us from the past; we can but notice their impotency. Our adversaries recognise the truth as we do; for their very increase of violence is but the expression of their disappointment. On the 24th February, 1848, they had proclaimed the Republic, but they had not made France republican. Cowed for a moment, she had gradually resumed her former habits, and on the 10th December she believed in good faith to have returned to a monarchical régime. Above all was this the case with the petitioners upon the bounty of the former Civil List. Suddenly deprived by revolutionary puritanism of the relief to their necessities which was granted them by the generosity of the Crown, they easily indulged the illusion that the 10th December was to restore the past to them. The people scarcely knew the principal and fundamental dispositions of the Constitution and the new laws; as for their details, they completely ignored them. Assuredly they knew not that instead of the twenty-five or thirty millions that constituted the Civil List of the King, the sovereign whom she had given to herself had only 600,000 frs. wherewith to defray the immense and incessant calls inseparable from his station.

It was thought that Napoleon, Chief of the State, must necessarily dispose of great wealth; and it may safely be said that each of the pensioners of the former Civil Lists addressed his petition to the Prince with the conviction that the Revolution had only suspended during a few months the payment of reliefs or allowances formerly accorded.

To this legion of postulants worthy of sincere interest was added a number of new clients at the

Prince's accession to office. The Restoration had not been particularly solicitous about the welfare of the veterans of the Empire; the Monarchy of July had but very imperfectly supported them. The return of Louis Napoleon as head of the Government meant to their minds the day of reparation; and from all parts of France those of the relics of the Empire who lacked the necessaries of life, who had failed to obtain the well-earned reward of their services, addressed themselves to the Prince, from whom they expected as a sort of right the satisfaction of their requests. To those, as well as to the adherents to other causes, as to all those who were in want and suffered, the Prince opened his modest purse without counting.\* Therefore an increase of salary had become absolutely necessary. The Assembly knew all this; and if it did not blame the generous use the Prince made of the starveling wages given him, it felt envious beforehand of the popularity that might accrue to him from wider-spread charity to be indulged by means of its largess.

With a thorough want of tact, the Assembly rejected the petition for an increased grant submitted to it by the Ministry, and by doing so exposed itself, in the eyes of sensible people, in the eyes of those who were interested, and at whom it struck indirectly, in the eyes of the whole nation, to the grave suspicion of wishing to inaugurate a system of persecution with regard to the Chief of the State.

Such an incident could not pass unnoticed. France took sides with the Prince she had elected, and on the spur of the moment subscriptions were raised everywhere to supply Louis Napoleon with what the Chamber refused him. It wanted the

\* I wrote the footnote to p. 113 long before I read the above. It only bears out what I said then. Louis Napoleon relieved all suffering that came to his knowledge, without distinction of creed, political opinions, or nationality.—*Trans.*

refusal of the Prince, officially announced, to check this burst of sympathy. The Prince sold part of his horses, reduced his establishment, and, let us acknowledge it, resolutely discounted the future, rather than let suffer those whom he felt bound to assist. He alone felt cramped; he had experienced far greater privations in the course of his life. He often jestingly alluded to what, without much exaggeration, he termed his poverty; and, his eyes fixed on the future, he easily consoled himself for the tribulations of the present.

After this escapade—and the word is by no means harsh, when applied to such petty worrying on the part of men invested with a far different and serious mission—the Chamber felt that it would like some repose from its labours, and, in spite of the terrors of the *Coup d'État* constantly announced, it separated for some time.

It did not seem altogether impossible to the Prince that the scattering of its members far and wide throughout the provinces, their contact with the populations, might exercise a beneficial influence on the former. He persisted in the belief that the day would come when reason and the evidence of the truth would silence party spirit, allay the ardour of unthinking passion, finally triumph over dangerous errors, and bring about in one patriotic accord the constitutional solutions France was wishing for from her inmost heart. He tried once more to make M. Odilon Barrot share these hopes. He sent for and charged him with the formation of a Parliamentary Cabinet, whose programme would be the selfsame one that they had agreed upon previous to the formation of the Cabinet of the 24th January—viz. the voting by the Chamber of the revision of the Constitution and an appeal to the nation to decide the pending constitutional questions. One should be more just to M. Odilon Barrot than he was to the men of the Empire: it should be acknowledged that



he sincerely associated himself with the idea of the Prince, and loyally attempted everything to ensure its success.

Everything having been arranged and agreed upon at the Elysée, the Prince having even accepted for his possible Ministers the very men who had just shown themselves his most zealous adversaries, M. Odilon Barrot started his campaign, and endeavoured to group around him in the Cabinet those of his friends by whose aid he expected to obtain a majority of common-sense. Common-sense was, however, no longer to be looked for in the Chamber. The overtures of M. Odilon Barrot were received with sarcasm. "Neither a day nor a crown-piece," was the answer given him. But let us listen to M. Odilon Barrot himself; his evidence is assuredly above suspicion. He will tell us that with the least show of goodwill of the Assembly, the *Coup d'État* would have become unnecessary; that lawful means could have given satisfaction to both the country and the Prince; and that if an agreement was not arrived at between the Executive and the Assembly, the fault must be attributed to the leaders of the majority and the chiefs of the old parties.

"What, then, was wanted to succeed?" asks M. Odilon Barrot, in speaking of his fruitless endeavours to form a Ministry of conciliation.\* "Merely that some men should have condescended to understand that it was preferable to revise the Constitution by regular methods than to risk its violation, either by a new act of popular sovereignty or by a *Coup d'État*, and that it was better to modify the law of the 31st May ourselves, and within a reasonable limit, than to see it solemnly revoked in its entity by Louis Napoleon. I say it without anger against persons, but with a deep feeling of bitterness against the fatal consequences that sprang

\* "Mémoires Posthumes de Odilon Barrot." Tome iv. p. 124. G. Charpentier, libraire-éditeur.



from it: *it is from the very quarter that relief should have come that the obstacle came; and one cannot but acknowledge that the responsibility of the catastrophe, like that of 1848, lies in a great measure with those who, in the presence of an evident peril, have neither known how to yield, to resist, to organize the fight, or to lend themselves to peace.* If I had been directly interpellated on the subject, I should have been compelled to state that this time the formation of a Parliamentary Ministry failed *through the fault of the leaders of the Conservative party."*

And who is it that speaks the language we ourselves speak? We have already said it: it is M. Odilon Barrot, the man least suspected of goodwill towards us—M. Odilon Barrot, who at each page of his book uses all his ingenuity to point out one by one what he terms the errors of Louis Napoleon, who incriminates all his acts, who attacks unjustly and unpolitely all those who serve and support him, and who only renders this accidental homage to the truth because it appears to him in such a dazzling light that he virtually renounces the attempt to hide it. To thus condemn his warmest friends, to say that with them arose the obstacle, to distinctly lay with them the responsibility of the *Coup d'État*, is it not absolving Louis Napoleon a hundred times from the stigma of his bold enterprise? And if M. Odilon Barrot proclaims so loudly this unimpeachable truth, is there any need for us to add aught to such admissions?

Let it not be thought, however, when we speak like this, that we wish to palliate our acts; let it not be supposed that we ask others to share the responsibilities that weigh heavily neither on our conscience nor on our patriotism. It simply pleases us to dispossess our adversaries, by the hands of one of their own, of the right to accuse us. And when, later on, we shall say that on the 2nd December we did nothing but respond to the urgent

needs of a situation which was not our handiwork, that we only undid, at the risk of our lives, the tangled difficulties that were the work of the various parties, if contradiction comes to us we shall only have to reply: Read your historian, read M. Barrot; he will tell you that it is you, and you only, who proved *the obstacle* to the pacific and constitutional solution of the crisis. To each one the part that belongs to him in history: to you the errors committed; to Louis Napoleon the glory of having repaired them.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### THE DEBATES ON THE REVISION OF THE CONSTITUTION.

Tactics of the Prince-President with the Assembly.—Ministry of the 10th April.—Article CXI. of the Constitution.—The speech at Dijon.—Discussion on the petition for the revision of the Constitution.—The Republic judged by M. de Falloux.—General Cavaignac confirms the Republican doctrine.—Prophecy with regard to M. Thiers.—MM. Berryer and Pascal Duprat.—The diatribes of M. Victor Hugo.—MM. Baroche, Dufaure, and Odilon Barrot.—The motion rejected.—Indirect resumption of the Debate.—Vote of censure on the Faucher Ministry.—Two courses open to Louis Napoleon.—The one he decides upon.

To boldly risk this constant provoking of the Prince, as did the leaders of the majority, they must have had either a very exalted idea of the former's forbearance or a profound contempt for his authority. It is more likely, though, that they were stricken with a singular blindness, which made them think that this war of pin-pricks would prove favourable to their designs. The least reflection would have shown them the manifold dangers their headlong course was attracting on their heads. They might exasperate the Prince, and by so doing compel him to renounce all patience, and thus provoke the outbreak of the crisis—the *Coup d'État*

which, in spite of their bravado, was the constant source of their anxiety. They must also have been aware that they irritated a great many sensible people and troubled the peace of the country, that day by day they lessened the number (so reduced already) of their adherents, to throw them back into the ranks of the partisans of Louis Napoleon. Everything, therefore, was prejudicial to their cause, and beneficial to the Chief of the State in this course of systematic aggression.

Of what use were, then, those powerful faculties of the most eminent men of France, in council assembled, if between them they could not succeed in fathoming the true intentions of the Prince, whom to thwart they had made their study? Why, then, did they fail to divine his plan of action, to foresee his resolutions, to seize the drift of his acts, to opportunely parry the blows he dealt them? So powerful by their intellect and experience, why were they beaten in all their encounters by their enemy—who alone, and almost without counsel, from his retreat at the Elysée laughed at their menaces, profited by their blunders, and prepared to strike at them in his own time if he failed to bend them to his will? Why this strange contradiction? Why were the strong crushed by him whom they called the weak? Because the weak had on his side truth, reason, the immense co-operation of the country, a clearly defined aim that could be openly avowed—to wit, the saving of France without agitation and without disorder—and because the strong were, on the contrary, without cohesion, because darkness alone could prolong their compromise; because, however honourable their devotion to their cause, the country failed to credit them with either the concern for her welfare or the power to ensure her tranquillity. Proportionate to the frequency of attacks was the benefit derived by Louis Napoleon from his imperturbable patience in choosing his mode of counter-attack. Often, and through mere

calculation, he delayed it. He preferred to let the public mind regain its composure on the morrow of parliamentary perturbations; he affected a kind of pride, as it were, in being avenged by public opinion before avenging himself; then, at the carefully chosen moment, he struck in his turn—and blows that left their mark.

It is thus that after he had crushed General Changarnier he patiently allowed the Chamber to pile error upon violence. He had without a murmur allowed the offensive order of the day of the 6th January to pass. He had apparently taken no notice of the refusal for a supplementary grant, and of the insults that had so compendiously accompanied this refusal; he had not seemed to mind the refusal to co-operate in the formation of a Cabinet of conciliation; he was not even moved by the gross injury contained in the sentence bandied about in the Chamber—"Not a day nor a crown-piece:" which was nothing more than a bit of impolitic bluster, seeing that there was neither a majority to act nor a country to approve.

But in a speech delivered at Dijon, to which we shall have to refer by-and-by, the Prince-President took care to settle arrears with his adversaries, and to give them, at the same time, a hint of what he expected from the Chamber in the debates that had become imminent on the demand for the revision of the Constitution. But before committing himself to speech, and especially in expectation of this solemn discussion, he had formed a Parliamentary Ministry capable of standing the onslaughts of the tribune. By the 10th April, 1851, he had got together a new Cabinet. Unable to include those whom M. Odilon Barrot termed "the leaders of the Conservative party," and who, on the contrary, were nothing but the firebrands of the coalition, he composed it of his most eminent friends. Nevertheless, he made the great concession to the party of distrust to confide to one of its accredited members, M. Léon

Faucher, the portfolio most important at such a critical moment—that of the Interior. The presence of M. Léon Faucher at the Interior, said as plainly as words could speak, that, as long as he occupied this post, he, the parliamentarian *par excellence*, nothing would be attempted against the Chamber, that no fears need be entertained of a *Coup d'État*.

The Cabinet of the 10th April was composed as follows:—

MM. BAROCHE, Foreign Affairs.

ROUHER, Justice.

LÉON FAUCHER, Interior.

MAGNE, Public Works.

Marquis DE CHASSELOUP-LAUBAT, Marine.

General RANDON, War.

FOULD, Finances.

Marquis DE CROUSEILHES, Public Education.

BUFFET, Commerce.

It was evident that before resuming the struggle the Chamber wanted to see the new Ministers at work; consequently it threw out a vote of no confidence, somewhat too prematurely moved by the Left. It did not lay down its arms; it merely waited.

Nevertheless, the critical moment was at hand when the Chamber had to confront the grand debate on the revision. Article CXI. of the Constitution fixed its possible date, which was eagerly looked forward to as the beginning of the decisive encounter on this battle-ground of the revision of the fundamental compact. Article CXI. ran as follows:—

“When in the final year of a Legislature, the National Assembly shall have declared its wish for the partial or entire modification of the Constitution, this revision shall be proceeded with in the following manner:

“The revisional Assembly shall only be elected



for three months. It shall only occupy itself with the revision for which it was convoked. Nevertheless, in case of urgent need, it may provide for legislative necessities."

If this constitutional provision was not known in all its details throughout the country, its main spirit was by no means ignored. It was known that on and after the 28th May the petition for the revision of the Constitution might be regularly deposited with the Chamber; consequently the petitions which for a long time already had been addressed to the Assembly were increased with great vigour. They soon became an avalanche; and, whatever its own feeling on the subject, the Chamber saw itself compelled to obey this pressure and to engage on this grave discussion, which might lead to a peaceful solution, but which might equally compel decisive resolves.

At the very outset of the debate the Prince thought it his duty to warn the Chamber and the country of the attitude he meant to take in the event of possible complications. The banquet at Dijon would offer him a rostrum for the ventilating of his legitimate remonstrances against the aggressions of the past months—a platform from which he might pronounce a proud warning which would reveal both his confidence in his own strength and the firmness of his resolves. On the 1st June, 1851, replying to the toast of the Mayor of Dijon, the Prince said:

"I could wish that those who doubt the future had accompanied me among the populations of the districts of the Yonne and the Côte-d'Or. They might have taken heart by judging for themselves of the real disposition of public spirit. They would have become aware that neither intrigues, attacks, nor envenomed party strife are in harmony with the feelings or conditions of the country. France desires neither the return of the ancient régime, disguised in no matter what shape, nor the experi-



ment of impracticable and dangerous utopian theories. It is because I am the natural adversary of the one and the other, that she has placed her trust in me. If this were not the case, how could the touching sympathy of the people with regard to me be explained?—a sympathy that resists the most violent polemics and exonerates me from all share in her sufferings.”

It was the answer to the party tactics, to the underhanded dealings of the Chamber, to the fruitless attempts at fusion pursued by the leaders of the majority, to the insults from the tribune, to the aggressive orders of the day, to the purposely hostile votes of the Assembly. After this vindication of the past the Prince turned to the future, and he resumed:

“A new phase of our political era begins. From one end of France to the other petitions are being signed praying for the revision of the Constitution. I await with confidence such manifestations of the country, and such resolutions of the Assembly, as are inspired solely by concern for the public welfare.

“Since I acceded to power I flatter myself to have proved how, in the presence of the supreme interests of society, I can waive all consideration of self. The most violent and unjust attacks have not exhausted my patience. Whatever duties the country may impose upon me, she will find me ready to obey her will; and be assured, gentlemen, that France shall not perish in my hands.”

Words like these were scrupulously correct. If the Prince placed his hand on the hilt of his sword, he did not draw it from its scabbard; and the susceptibilities those words provoked in the Chamber were the more exaggerated, seeing that in numerous similar circumstances the Prince had used the like. But the Assembly felt irritable. Its faults, of which it was conscious, had wound it up to a chronic state of excitement, that caught at every

opportunity to show it. Hence the speech at Dijon had the honours of an interpellation.

This time, to the hackneyed and reiterated comments of the oppositions held together by the common bond of fear of a *Coup d'État*, there was added an act the importance of which should be fully measured. Goaded by his insatiable craving for notoriety, General Changarnier thought it necessary to get into the tribune. He believed himself invested with the exclusive mission of protecting the Assembly. He let no opportunity go by to remind it of this mission, and he assured it with pride that it might trust to his vigilance and authority. Replying to the Minister for War, General Changarnier said:—

“The soldier will always obey the voice of his chief, but no one will induce our soldiers to march against the laws and against this Assembly. *Not a battalion, not a squad, will be enticed into this fatal path; because they would be confronted by their chiefs whom they are in the habit of following into the path of duty and honour.* MANDATORIES OF FRANCE, YOU MAY DELIBERATE IN PEACE!!!”

One must weigh the words of this manifesto to appreciate the full scope of its intentions. It was tantamount to a summons to the army to revolt at a given moment, to refuse obedience to their hierarchical chiefs. It warned those chiefs that if, as they were bound to do by the military laws, they made themselves the faithful executors of the orders of the Minister for War, they would find themselves confronted by seditious generals to take their places and so lead their battalions to rebellion. Words guilty enough assuredly, but above all unpardonable on the lips of a soldier, who thus publicly insulted the army, and those at its head, in overlooking its most essential and most precious virtue—blind obedience to the orders of its chiefs and unquestioning respect for discipline. Vain and haughty words: for in his inmost heart,

whatever idea he may have had with regard to his own merits and his influence on the troops, General Changarnier could not have for one moment conceived the possibility of being able to convert the army into a mutinous cohort. Imprudent words, dangerous tall-talk: because in thus laying bare his secret designs, he put the Government on its guard; he warned the generals to watch over their men more closely than ever; he stimulated their feeling of duty, and imbued them, as it were, with the idea of vindicating the affront to their fidelity. Finally, fatal and perfidious words: because they deceived the Chamber by holding out to it the dazzling but chimerical hope of victoriously opposing by force an enterprise directed against it. They encouraged its inclinations to strife, and prepared a hostile majority on the eve of the debates on the revision, when the efforts of its prudent members who wished to arrive at the public good without violent commotion, tended on the contrary, were directed, to allay the passions and to profit by the salutary fear that swayed the Assembly to obtain from it concord and a pacific solution.

We must omit nothing with reference to this short oratorical performance, which it has pleased people to invest with a kind of celebrity, but to which events have rendered justice, restituting its real character—that of being ridiculous. It was not the exclusive work of General Changarnier. Those few words aspired to the dignity of a manifesto, and they were the subject of a discussion, in due form, between three or four of the Prince's most irreconcilable enemies. M. Thiers made one of this secret conference. The primary idea belonged undoubtedly to General Changarnier; and he had, as usual, committed his first flow of eloquence to paper. This document—the communication of which we owe to a friend who is its jealous owner—this document, which contains the genuine primary idea of the General, is covered with corrections. Its

composition seems to labour and to halt. On a second leaf is the copy of the first effort, but still covered with corrections. Finally, the *factum* is copied on a third leaf. It is the clean copy of this masterpiece which the orator-general had succeeded in imprinting upon his memory, and which he delivered on the 3rd June from the tribune, amidst the frenzied applause of a majority, that had worked itself up to a delirium at the most trifling cost.\*

The excitement of the speech at Dijon, and of the incident it had provoked, had scarcely subsided when the Assembly began the great debate on the revision of the Constitution. The Bill had been laid on the table by the Duke de Broglie, which sponsorship invested it with the gravity due to its character. The Committee had been appointed on the 7th June; its reporter, M. de Tocqueville, deposited his report on the 25th June; and on the 14th July was opened this solemn debate, which during six protracted sittings afforded the free ventilation of any and every opinion.

Taken exclusively by itself, this discussion sums up all the causes of complaint of the various parties—all their hopes, their doctrines, their programmes. In virtue of this title alone we are bound to concede more space to it than we have hitherto devoted to the debates of Parliament. It is, in fact, highly important to know from their own lips what the adversaries of Louis Napoleon wanted. In this revelation we shall find both the origin and the justification of the subsequent decisions forced upon the Prince-President by the wire-pullers of the coalesced parties.

After the customary apotheosis of the merits of the Republic, by one of the purists of the Mountain, M. de Falloux engages in the debate, and at the very outset raises its tone. In admirably chosen

\* The three leaves are still as they were in 1851, at General Changarnier's, held together by a pin. The last is written on the fly-leaf torn from some printed letter of invitation to a funeral or wedding.

language he demonstrates first of all the right, the moral and constitutional liberty, of the Assembly to vote the revision of the Constitution. He will have nothing to do with a partial revision, what he wants is entire and absolute revision. By this supreme appeal to the wishes of the country, he expects France to emerge from the state of distress in which she is held captive by the continual experiment of the republican form of government. With infinite tact, he brings to light the country's want of fitness to live under a Republic. "A Republic is not made with 'circulars,'" he says; "neither is it made with commissioners. A Republic is made with habits and customs, with institutions, by virtue of a republican geographical position; a Republic is made with republican virtues. That is how a Republic is made, if it be made at all. Short of that, it becomes a detestable and pitiful sham."

After which the orator refutes the fallacious doctrine that "the Republic is the régime that divides us least"—a doctrine by the aid of which M. Thiers attempted then, as afterwards, to lull the country to sleep on the brink of a precipice. "The Republic," said M. de Falloux, "is not the régime that divides us least: it is the régime that enables us to remain divided, which is a different thing; it is the régime which allows us to remain divided against each other—loyally, honourably, conveniently as far as we have gone. But to-morrow this may perhaps no longer be the case.

"Well, it is an advantage which we have enjoyed for the last three years; it is quite enough; do not let us abuse it.

"This régime which divides us least is that which ruins France, which renders nought all her strength, which condemns the great party of order to a radical and insuperable condition of impotency; it is the régime which not only condemns our country to immobility, but to lethargy—to the kind of condition when there is still sufficient



consciousness left to perceive that your grave is being dug and your shroud being sewn, but not sufficient to cry out or to make the motion that would save you from being buried alive.

"This is the condition to which we have been brought by the régime that divides us least.

"Well, such a condition cannot last long without becoming mortal to a nation. It is a condition of lethargy, every one knows it; and to a condition of lethargy there are but two alternatives—that of death or of awakening. Therefore we must stoutly and loyally set to work; we must sound the evil to its uttermost depth, and endeavour, not to apply a palliative, but to find a cure for this evil."

Finally, M. de Falloux points to the Monarchy as the only sheet-anchor, and remaining within the domain of theory, steering clear of all exclusivism, he appeals to men of all parties to help in this patriotic work. In his opinion the Red Spectre is only to be dreaded while the Conservatives are divided among themselves; their union will instantly cause it to vanish. Union to save France—such is the summary of this eloquent and patriotic address. And assuredly we may be pardoned for inviting those who have unconsciously been betrayed into accepting the republican form of Government to carefully ponder those wise and philosophical words of M. de Falloux.

After M. de Falloux, M. de Morny is heard on behalf of the Orleanist party. What he wants he says outright. He rejects the revision of the Constitution, because the revision is the prelude to the Empire; and he wishes at all costs to avoid so perilous a contingency. He acknowledges neither the right divine Monarchical, nor the right divine Republican; whatever happens, he will remain riveted, as it were, to his memories and to his hopes. His hopes are easily understood: it is in some form or other an Orleans Prince at the head of the Government.

To General Cavaignac is reserved the task of bringing to the debate the defence of the Republican doctrine. He accomplishes it with remarkable talent—with a moderation, a tact, and a feeling of dignity by which one recognises the man who has filled the foremost rank in the State. If he is condemned to resort too often to abstruse theories, if he is compelled to take up once more the axiom of M. Thiers—"the Republic is the régime that divides us least"—the fault lies with the necessities of his cause. With General Cavaignac the Republic is a right and an indisputable one. The revision of the Constitution is decidedly premature. Such an enterprise can only be logical and fruitful after a long and conscientious trial. But under no conditions will the orator admit the right of a Republican Constitution to re-elect the Chief of the State, or to prolong his term of office. He opposes the revision because he sees in it, without admitting it in speech so much as in thought, the lawful privilege granted to the nation to perpetuate the power on the head of Louis Napoleon, and perhaps to modify its form. The energetic and irrevocably determined resolutions of his party may easily be gathered from the drift of General Cavaignac's speech.

M. Michel de Bourges in his turn ascends the tribune. We must note here in its proper place a prediction by which he enlivened these debates for a moment. It was M. Thiers who paid the penalty. To M. Thiers, who at that time assailed the revolutionary movement with all the ardour of his mind, perhaps of his convictions, to M. Thiers who set himself up as the promoter and supporter of the reactionary laws, M. Michel de Bourges addressed the somewhat pungent prophecy: "M. Thiers, he will more and more be coming over to our side; for he is a Frenchman, a revolutionary at heart, even more than he is aware, and more than he cares to admit." (Great applause and laughter, in which M. Thiers joins.)

M. Michel de Bourges knew his adversary of 1851.\* If he had lived twenty years later he would have found him one of the warmest partisans of a new Republic; but that one gave him power, and assuredly he could not show himself ungrateful.

The speech of M. Berryer was anxiously looked for. No more propitious opportunity than this one could have been offered him for the display of his magnificent oratorical talents. He had to avenge royalty for the accusations M. Michel de Bourges had showered upon it; above all, he had to refute the cruel charge of its being antipathic to the nation. The necessities of his defence carried him, perhaps, beyond the traditional programme of the majority of his friends when he glorified the Revolution of 1789, when he disputed its heritage to the Republic itself in order to appropriate it to his own cause. "But the Republic," he said, "has broken every principle of the institutions of 1789. . . . But what of your friends Touret and Bailly and Chapelier, and so many others whom I could cite, who founded the institutions of 1789? They perished on the scaffolds of 1789. There is, indeed, an enormous distance between you and 1789. Its principles, its great reforms which we claim for our country, which we shall know to maintain for her, for which we have pledged our lives. . . . You know whether I have been unfaithful to the principles of 1789; and my friends are as staunch to them as I am. My friends wish to defend them, those principles; they claim them for the better government of the social fabric. And beware how you say that monarchy is incompatible with them. You forget that the great work of 1789, invited, as it were, by the most virtuous of Kings, invited by the grand martyr Louis XVI., that this great work was based on the

\* Michel de Bourges had been his college chum at Aix. Michel de Bourges was the author of the famous dictum that the most difficult thing to obtain from members of the Assembly who did not speak was that they should keep silent.—*Trans.*

principle of the hereditary succession of the public sovereignty. . . ." (Cheers, and "It's true, it's true.") "Where, then, will you seek your incompatibilities?"

M. Berryer felt more on his own ground when, with all the fire of his great oratorical gifts, he began the apology of the Restoration. He had some relentless truths to tell, and they lost nothing at his lips. On the great subject under discussion he said little, and his inmost thoughts remained, no doubt, voluntarily wrapt in a kind of mist. He voted the revision, and placed his slender hopes of the Restoration in the decisions of the Constituent Assembly to be subsequently elected. But in the event of the proposed revision being rejected, an event which he thought probable, he insisted upon the submission of all to the present law. Consequently, he asked the Prince to bow to the ostracism which the Constitution of 1848 pronounced intentionally against him. At the same time he asked the country to stifle her inclinations and convictions, to await amidst protracted Republican agonies the salvation due to some chance hidden as yet. One dread haunted him above all others: if the revision of the Constitution was not voted by the Chamber, it meant the illegal, but to his mind inevitable, re-election of Louis Napoleon. He showed him to the Chamber as absolutely commanding the situation, as master of the country, master of everything. Such a solution meant the certain destruction of all hopes of the restoration of his King. This he wished to prevent; and the revision of the Constitution commended itself to him as the only safeguard against so threatening a peril.

The Republic had had its dogmatic defender in General Cavaignac, its too violent apologist in M. Michel de Bourges. The passionate member of the Mountain had not scrupled to vindicate the solidarity of the Convention by condoning its most terrible days, its most detestable dictators; but he

had remained within the limits of brilliant but cloudy declamation. M. Pascal Duprat formulates with greater precision the opinions and designs of his party. He rejects the revision because those who desire a monarchy or the prolongation of Louis Napoleon's powers have made themselves its defenders. Speaking of the immense power of modern commonwealths, which according to him, has not been sufficiently insisted upon in this long debate, he ends his speech by saying: "Well, and what is it that is proposed to you to day? To resist this irresistible force. Take care; do not compel by imprudent measures—do not compel this sovereign force to assume its battle-name and call itself, *once more*, the Revolution."

All the perils of 1852 uprose in those threatening words of "this son of the Convention," as he styled himself; and the frenzied plaudits of the Mountain were less the homage to the talent which M. Pascal Duprat had displayed than the ardent endorsement of the terrible menaces of which he had made himself the interpreter.

Notwithstanding some lapses into violence, the discussion had up till now been serious and dignified. It remained with M. Victor Hugo to make it deviate from its gravity. In an endless oration, the unfortunate poet who had been thrust into politics piled upon each other all the sophisms, all the social heresies, which long meditation had wrung from his brain festering with pride and ambition. Arousing the mirth of the Chamber at first, he ended by arousing its indignation. Handling everything without knowing, and always in this pretentious style, enamelled with antithesis and metaphor, he failed to inspire a conviction of his seriousness on any bench of the Chamber. The obligatory applause of the Mountain was nothing but the natural reward of his apostasy. The least prejudiced regretted such an aberration of intellect, and could only lament when they heard the new



Mountaineer successively assail all our great social doctrines.

Profaning everything, even to that very past which he had smothered, as it were, with his incense, he extolled the merits and the glory of the Republic, as if it had always been his idol, and he compelled his listeners to fling in his face that title of Peer of France he owed to the Monarchy which he loaded with injuries, to which he was under many obligations, whose flatterer, defender and pensioner he had finally been.\* This pension of two thousand francs which he owed to the munificence of Louis XVIII., and which he admitted to have regularly received from the privy purse, he was reminded of in the harshest terms; and the poet, crushed by the most damning proofs of his

\* The manner of its bestowal as much as the pension itself was so graceful an act of Louis XVIII. that Victor Hugo should have never forgotten it. In 1822 the conspiracy of Saumur (the third of the name) broke out and implicated a young man named Delon, the son of an officer who had served under Victor Hugo's father. The poet offered the proscribed fugitive one a shelter, only he was inconsistent enough to address this letter to Delon's mother, and to simply put it in the post. Of course Delon never came, but what did come was a pension of twelve hundred francs from Louis XVIII. to the young author of the *Odes and Ballads*, who had just got married. Two years and a half afterwards, Victor Hugo had to request a favour of the then Director General of the Public Post, a very different functionary from the French Postmaster-General of the present day. Hugo was very kindly received, and the request was immediately granted. But M. Roger, who was a man of letters as well as a public functionary, would not let the opportunity slip of having a good chat with the poet, then already famous. "Do you know to what you owe your pension, my dear poet," asked M. Roger suddenly. "Well," answered Hugo, "I probably owe it to the little I have written." "Not a bit; shall I tell you to what you owe it? Do you remember the conspiracy of Saumur, and the letter you wrote to a young man named Delon, offering him the shelter and secrecy of your home?" This time Victor Hugo did not answer. He had written the letter between his four walls, had spoken to no one of it, and his nightcap—this confidant which Louis XI. maintained should be burned after one had confided a secret to it—his nightcap knew not of it, seeing that Victor Hugo probably wore no such headgear. "Well," resumed M. Roger, seeing that the poet did not answer, "this letter was shown to King Louis, who already knew you by your writings. 'So, so,' said the King; 'a great talent, and above all a good heart: we must reward this young man.' And he ordered you a pension of twelve hundred francs." In fact, the Bour-

ungrateful recantations, could but attempt some justifications that justified nothing. Carried away by his vindictiveness, he proceeded to threats, and bade the Right of the Chamber when they crossed the spot (Place de la Concorde) where Louis XVI. and so many noble victims had perished, ponder the warnings of those bloody memories. After which he straightway attacked Louis Napoleon. His insults became so violent that the Assembly protested against such flagrant disregard of the most common conventionalities of debate.

"It's a diatribe, and not a speech," the President of the Chamber said to the speaker, who, notwithstanding the reminder, was none the less proud of what he considered a success. When the human mind arrives at a paroxysm of self-admiration like that at which M. Victor Hugo had arrived, all moral sense vanishes, and one sees praise in the most scathing public affront.

With serious people, with the intelligent portion of the nation, such a discourse required no reply; it provided its own and most conclusive refutation. But the masses are too often taken in by this invective, by this inflated imagery, by these perfidious accusations. The Ministry felt it its duty to reply to this emphatic act of accusation; and M. Baroche, Minister for Foreign Affairs, accepted the task. The Minister did not spare his blows. Judging, and with cause, that in France ridicule kills its man more effectually than the best of arguments, M. Baroche began by crushing the unfortunate poet beneath the weight of his satire. Comparing his fresh Republican convictions with

bons had always shown themselves most considerate to Victor Hugo. A few days after the above mentioned conversation, Victor Hugo received the Legion of Honour from Charles X. Even in this gift the utmost delicacy was shown. Victor Hugo and Lamartine figured on the list of candidates for the honour presented to the King on public occasions. Charles X. struck out the two names. "Those names are too illustrious to be confounded with the others," he said to Count Sosthène de la Rochefoucauld; "you will present a separate report."—*Trans.*

his former Legitimist ardour, he recalled the qualification bestowed upon him of "the most Pindaric of Royalists;" he showed him introducing himself to the Elysée, helping to found the famous Reactionary Committee of the Rue de Poitiers, and thus running through the gamut of opinion without the least effort. But M. Baroche had other corn to grind than to chastise M. Victor Hugo. He went to the core of the debate, and with serried logic demonstrated the opportunity of revision. He showed it to be the only means of foiling the many intrigues playing at cross purposes in the Chamber, the surest guarantee against this *Coup d'État* so often announced. He wound up his speech by saying:—

"Insist upon the lawful revision; vote it; imprison us in this law which we are accused of wishing to transgress. It is all we ask of you.

"For the sake of the country, do not reject this remedy in which she has placed her trust; I implore you, gentlemen, to remember—and I will conclude with these words—to remember the enormous responsibility you incur if you reject this demand for revision, which, in my opinion, will satisfy the true needs, the genuine wants, the real wish of the whole of the nation."

Might not another loyal warning be perceived on the part of the supreme power in this warm persistency of M. Baroche. To any man of sense his words meant this: "We point out to you the lawful solution which will dispense us from having recourse to an act of authority; listen to our counsel, and every reason for a *Coup d'État* disappears."

M. Dufaure was one of the most fervent *Constitutionnels* of the Chamber; he was under the impression that the validity of the origin of the Constitution, the moral authority of the Constituent Assembly, was being questioned. He came to protest against the charge. Those circular letters of oppression of 1848, those abuses of power on the

part of the agents of the Government, far from attributing any influence to them, he stigmatized them and maintained that they had produced an effect absolutely the reverse of what was expected from them. While admitting that the Constitution was in many respects imperfect in detail, he objected to make it a reason for its revision—in other words, for calling into question its essential doctrines. He wanted the maintenance of the Republic, and protested against the charge of its being distasteful to the country. He wound up his speech by maintaining that in the event of non-revision the country would not dare to resort to illegal measures by re-electing Louis Napoleon in 1852 in an unconstitutional manner. He carried his confidence much farther: he expressed the hope that the Prince himself would refuse to comply with the wish of the nation, and that thus, without commotion and without tumult, the will of France would be set at nought.

The debate was getting exhausted. Five weary days had enabled every opinion to fully ventilate itself. Above all had the extreme opinions been thoroughly supported. M. Odilon Barrot came to close the discussion by bringing to the tribune words of moderation, prudence, and conciliation. After a sound exposition of constitutional doctrines, after a careful examination of the conditions which the acceptance or the refusal of the revision by the Assembly would entail upon the country, M. Barrot showed the Chamber the grave responsibilities to which a refusal would expose it, if this refusal led to political and social perturbation and agitation. To the Assembly, to its obstinacy and resistance, the country would attribute, and not without reason, the causes of the disorder from which she would suffer. If the orator had addressed a calm, ductile Assembly, unhardened by foregone conclusions, he would have obtained from it the revision of this Constitution, when he pointed out

that it was its own as well as the nation's interest to grant it.

Had the least clear-sightedness been left to the Assembly, such language would have been listened to; but there are hours when every vestige of independence of mind disappears from the Chambers, when its members only listen to their own thoughts. Prudence, reason, truth lose their empire; passion takes their stead. And it is from those fatal dispositions that too often spring resolutions which bind the fate of nations, when there is no superior hierarchical and constitutional authority, as is the case under a monarchy, that can be called in to exercise its control on those decisions, the results of such passion.

And in this kind of debate the Chamber was supreme; no power could control its decision; albeit that this sovereignty had undergone some sort of mutilation from the ingenious suspicion displayed in the framing of the Constitution of 1848. It was no longer half *plus* one of the suffrages that constituted a majority; a fourth of the votes sufficed to defeat the proposed revision and to exercise the sovereignty of refusal. The votes of the Assembly were divided as follows:—

Number of voters . . . . .	724
Constitutional majority, <i>i.e.</i> three-fourths of the votes .	543
For the adoption of the measure . . . . .	446
Against . . . . .	278

The proposal having thus only united the ordinary majority, and not the constitutional majority, the Assembly rejected the motion for the revision of the Constitution.

But how much could there be left of a Constitution condemned by the country, condemned by the Chamber itself by a strong majority, and which only owed the prolongation of its precarious existence to the excessive precaution of the legislator, to the modification of the ordinary rules of voting of the Assembly, to the numerical and opinionated



minority of Parliament? The Constitution and the Chamber had been engulfed at the same time by this exasperating and impolitic decision.

After such protracted debates, it might be imagined that the last word had been said on this vexed question.

Had not, in fact, the Chamber sufficiently showed its hostility against Louis Napoleon? Had it not loudly enough proclaimed its desire to exclude him from all combinations of the future? Had it not clearly indicated to the country its determined resolution to resist the manifestations of her preferences and intentions, which became more patent each day? On all those points it might have been believed that the cup was full; and yet to some cantankerous minds there seemed still further precautions to be taken. Petitions continued to flow to the Chamber; all the constituted bodies, the municipalities above all, asked, some the revision of the Constitution, others the prolongation of Louis Napoleon's powers; all showed very clearly their dread of the conflict which, in 1852, would fatally result from the existing dispositions of the Constitution of 1848, and their desire to let the reins of power remain within the hands of the Prince. Those petitions and the movements whence they sprang constituted in the minds of the zealots of the Chamber a peril which it was imperative to exorcise without delay. In consequence of a discussion on this subject, and notwithstanding the assurances of M. Léon Faucher, who assuredly could not be suspected of being a fanatic in favour of the Prince, the Assembly adopted, by a majority of 333 against 320, the following amendment proposed by M. Baze:

“The National Assembly, while regretting that in certain localities the Administration, contrary to its duties, has used its influence to incite the citizens to petition, orders all further petitions to be deposited with the Committee of Preliminary Inquiry.”

This was both a fresh insult aimed at the Prince, a blaming of his Ministers, however prudent the latter had shown themselves face to face with this movement that passed over their heads, and a powerless and stupid warning to the country not to insist upon her wants and to cease troubling the Chamber with them.

A sorry spectacle, indeed, was this Chamber, thus pursuing by its intrigues, and at the cost of every humiliating contradiction, its purpose of excluding the Prince. To what illogical shifts had it not been reduced already? At each phase it proclaimed the sovereignty of the nation; it was the fundamental dogma it hedged round with its veneration, which it placed above everything; and all its efforts tended to paralyze to this nation, pretended to be the sovereign, the use she meant to make of her sovereignty. In order to shield itself, for the purpose of resistance, behind this Constitution, the passion-swayed production of a Chamber born from the most evil days, of a Chamber elected under the pressure of terrorist agents, it wanted to perpetuate its laws, lest the country, restored to herself, restored to her genuine freedom, should substitute the language of reason, of prudence, and of truth, for that of mistrust, passion, and injustice.

To this people, pompously proclaimed to be a free people, a sovereign people, the supreme arbiter of the destinies of the country, the Chamber, blinded by its own hatred, said :

You wish to keep Prince Louis Napoleon at the head of the State. Well, we do not wish it.

You ask the revision of the Constitution to enable you to lawfully re-elect the Prince. We refuse you this revision, which would open the door to the free manifestation of your will.

You threaten us, so tenacious is your will, to re-elect the Prince in spite of us, of our decisions, in spite of our prohibition. We warn you that we

shall organise an opposition to your votes ; we shall cancel your suffrages if they dare defy our omnipotence.

And to shield our attempt, to cut short your obstinacy, to close this grand debate, to stifle this outburst of public feeling which deafens us at the outset of every sitting by the depositing of innumerable petitions, to thrust back this inexhaustible manifestation which haunts, humbles, and insults us, we signify to you our contempt, and severely censure the Ministers whom we declare to be your confederates.

Finally, you sovereign people, be good enough to remember that your sovereignty consists in wishing only that which it is our sovereign pleasure to wish. Away with all chimera of independence. We have the weapons wherewith to strike you, if you do not submit. You ask us to lay them down ; on the contrary, we will sharpen them anew, so that you may the better feel their power. Sovereign people, submit ; abdicate your sovereignty until such day as you can show us that it favours our plans !

And to this Prince whom they wished to make the resigned spectator of their impotent agony they said : We are aware that the nation wishes to perpetuate the power on your head ; we are aware that in spite of our prohibition, in spite of the Constitution itself, this people, insubordinate to our tyranny, would proclaim you Chief of the State. We appeal to your abnegation of self and to your deferential submission to your relentless enemies : you will refuse this power which the country gives you, because some impotent enemies would rob you of it, to take it in your stead.

Was it not this they said to the Prince—was it not this they said to the country ? And is it surprising that both people and Prince crushed beneath their heel such presumptuous whims, such imbecile exactions, such revolting abuse of an expiring authority ?

In presence, then, of these resolutions of the Assembly—the refusal to revise the Constitution, the lawful interdict to re-elect Louis Napoleon—what was the latter's position?

Two courses were open to him. To submit to this weak but vindictive coalition, incapable by reason of its own divisions to create any Government whatsoever; to remain a passive looker-on of the convulsions of the country, and on the morrow of its ruin to cowardly shield himself behind the ill-will of the Chamber, behind the letter of the Constitution, in order to escape the terrible responsibility of having left this generous nation to perish beneath the ruins without having held out a helping hand—this was the first alternative that presented itself to the Chief of the State, tied hand and foot by the text of the Constitution, inmeshed in the votes of the Chamber. Is it necessary to say that so guilty an acquiescence was not within the nature of Louis Napoleon?

What was the other course that commended itself to the Prince? For that one, instead of looking on behind the constitutional text at the agony of France, it was necessary to listen to the promptings of his heart, to raise his thoughts to the level of the peril itself, to appeal to his own courage, devotion and patriotism, to place himself at the head of this nation in distress, and to give her, as well as her deliverance, the complete liberty to dispose of herself, to elect the Government of her choice. This course, the only one that could be understood by a generous and lofty nature, we shall see that Louis Napoleon decided upon it from the moment that all lawful means were jealously and narrowly closed against him.

From that day war is openly declared; the two champions confront one another; the encounter is without quarter—one of them must perish. Let us see, in fact, how each one in this desperate duello rehearses his blows, what will be the attitude of

this great witness of the strife, the country herself. The country beholds the peril; she feels that the victory of the Prince means the saving of her, that his defeat entails her ruin; hence she seconds him with all her might. The departmental assemblies are scarcely met in their ordinary sessions, when with almost unanimous accord they renew their demands for the revision of the Constitution; they place themselves in open hostility against the Chamber, and once more afford the Chief of the State a powerful encouragement at the crucial moment.\*

But it was not in company with M. Léon Faucher that one could resort to bold measures of resistance to the Chamber and appeals to the country. To the solution of an entirely new problem that might turn out to be dangerous, new and resolute men were wanted. We shall soon behold the last of the Ministerial evolutions of which the Chamber was a witness; we are to enter upon that active period of preparation for the great event which shall go down to history by the name of the 2nd December

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## CHAPTER X.

### THE FIRST CONFIDENCES OF LOUIS NAPOLEON.

Resignation of the Léon Faucher Ministry.—Origin and nature of my relations with the Prince.—Louis Napoleon's letters; my interviews with him; his overtures with regard to the *Coup d'État*; their results.—The conditions under which the new Ministry was to be formed.—The Cabinet of the 26th October.

THE Prince had need of all his strength to sustain with advantage the struggle in which he was engaged with the Assembly. Even more than his

\* Out of 85 Councils-General, 80 had asked the revision of the Constitution; three had abstained; only two had rejected the proposal, but by a very feeble minority. At that moment the department of the Seine had no Council-General.



own cause, that of the country lay wholly in his hands; such a responsibility imposed the duty of employing any and every of his weapons.

The law of the 31st May offered for all ordinary contingencies guarantees the worth of which the Prince by no means overlooked; but for the election of a Chief of the State, it seemed, at any rate, preferable to him to appeal to the whole of the nation, absolutely excepting none but those whom the law of the 15th March disqualified. Louis Napoleon went farther; and, always more democratic than those who surrounded and advised him, he preferred universal suffrage, without restrictions other than those resulting from legal disabilities, to the protective law of the 31st May. Hence he yielded to personal inclinations rather than to a desire for popularity when he decided to ask the repeal of the law of the 31st May.

The first hint of such a resolution would, as a matter of course, separate him from his Ministry, and create without commotion a crisis that would justify its removal. At the first announcement by the Prince of his wish to lay the project before the Chamber, M. Léon Faucher instantly tendered his resignation, and the whole Cabinet followed his example. It would be useless to deny that by the same blow the Prince very skilfully appropriated to himself the benefit of a popular proposal. The army wherewith to fight the Chamber was the nation, and the nation asked for the abrogation of the law of the 31st May. Hence, in laying before the Chamber the proposal it would infallibly reject, he was about to create for it a new title to the nation's dislike.

Where in this grave conjuncture was the material for a new Ministry to come from? From the Chamber? It was impossible to constitute from among its members a Cabinet that could command a majority; and besides, the moment for an act of authority seemed so near that it mattered little whether one

had or had not a majority in the Assembly. The Prince decided upon a combination which more than any other seemed to meet the difficulties henceforth inevitable. He would unite in one and the same Ministry men invested with missions apparently similar but absolutely different in reality—some having all his confidence, and being decided to follow him to the last in his conflict with the Assembly. Those he intended to entrust with the essential portfolios—those of the Interior and for War; and the others he chiefly meant to look to the despatch of public business and to bear the brunt of the debates in the Chamber for the time being.

From that moment I became so intimately bound up with the events the development of which we shall watch, that I cannot, however embarrassing it may be to always speak of one's self, shirk the obligation of describing the rôle the will of the Prince and circumstances reserved for me in this interesting period of the history of my country. I must, therefore, for a moment leave the facts with which we are occupied to explain by virtue of what title I took part in them. Besides, those few words will bring us back to the point where we left off; the past will rapidly lead us to the present, and not without throwing some light on the latter.

I have often been asked the circumstances that procured me the honour of having been called by Louis Napoleon to second him in his great enterprise of the 2nd December. I now beg to answer the question.

Before 1848 I had not known the Prince; I had had no relations with any of the members of his family. At the Revolution of February I had left my modest functions of sub-prefect at Beaune, and during the preliminaries of the election of the 10th December I did what did the majority of the Conservatives there, where they could dispose of some

influence: I carried on the propaganda of reason in favour of the candidature of Louis Napoleon.

A friend, Count Joachim Clary, proposed to introduce me to the Prince. My first visit dates from November, 1848. In January, 1849, I re-entered the public service as sub-prefect at Boulogne; and in October of the same year, in consequence of some incidents that elicited the approval of the Chief of the State, I was called to the prefecture of the department of the Allier.

The department of the Allier was the centre of a revolutionary organization which linked five or six of the adjacent departments together. More than once I had been enabled to obtain at Moulins information which was peculiarly interesting. The accident of my position enabled me to collect a series of facts that extended over an entire region, one of the most agitated in France.

In consequence of this, direct communication had been established between the Prince and myself, at his express desire, and my correspondence with him became sufficiently regular. I was interrogated upon the effect of such and such a Government measure; more than once I took the initiative in communicating my impressions. We were living in abnormal times; the Ministers had two masters—the Assembly and the Prince: no one was ignorant that they were two rival forces. The interest of the country seemed to me bound up with the Prince, who had a clearly defined aim which he might accomplish, rather than with the Assembly, whose divisions were a peril, and which was incapable of conducting us to a satisfactory solution. The exact knowledge of the currents of opinion in the provinces was a valuable guide to the Chief of the State; one might be allowed to suppose that his Government did not inform him in this respect with absolute impartiality. In supplying, for my part, this lamentable deficiency, I felt that I was

performing a duty. I perceived from the confidential replies I received from the Prince that on his side I was the object of his favourable notice. He did not delay to give me proof of it. During one of my journeys to Paris, he was kind enough to ask which situation I would prefer in the event of my leaving Moulins. I had expressed my wish to remain actively employed; a more important department than that of the Allier was my sole ambition. It was not long before my wishes were satisfied. The 7th March, 1851, I received the following letter from the Prince.

“Monsieur le Préfet,

“I have appointed you Prefect at Toulouse; and this nomination, of which I desire to be the first to inform you, you owe it to your constant energy, to your clearly defined and openly avowed attitude, —in short, to the sentiments you express in your last letter. You wish for an important populous centre. Toulouse is the principal one in the south, and the one whence, in the event of difficulties arising, you could usefully exercise your influence upon several neighbouring departments. You have succeeded in understanding my policy; you have applied it with success. Continue it in the Upper Garonne. Loyalty towards all parties, firmness against all, and, should they dare to come to an open conflict, energetic resolve in opposing them—such must ever be your line of conduct. I rely upon your intelligent devotion.

“Believe me, etc., etc.,

“LOUIS NAPOLEON.”

Toulouse, like Moulins, was a very centre of conspiracy. It was at Toulouse that the password of Demagogy was given to all the departments of the south-west; to those of the Aude, the East Pyrenees, the Lower Pyrenees, the Upper Pyrenees, the Tarn, the Tarn and Garonne, the Ariège, the

Gers—even to that of the Aveyron. My direct communications with the Prince, who wished to be personally informed of the real state of public feeling, were continued there also.

In the south-west the agitation was at fever heat. The advent of 1852 was regarded by all the demagogues as the period for a general uprising. They prepared for it with very little mystery. The end to be gained was in no way disguised. They were determined to revive a Revolution that had failed in 1848, one that had been diverted from its original purpose on the 10th December, by the thorough victory of the social revolution. Their organisation was powerful. The secret societies were properly constituted; their ramifications extended to the most distant communes, the most out-of-the-way hamlets. The leaders were everywhere men of action, ready to give the signal for every excess; it was an army in good form, eager to march at the word of command. In the camp of those implacable foes of society there was a complete unity. Unfortunately, facing those vigorously disciplined forces, there was a divided Conservative party, divided throughout the country as it was in the Chamber. Consequently the public mind began to grow very uneasy.

The more I studied the situation, the more I noticed that everywhere authority was being undermined. The spirit of resistance and revolt increased with every hour. The revolutionary party essayed its forces, and by these means tested public opinion. Sometimes a few of the most impatient went beyond the instructions of their leaders and as far as revolt. This happened in the little town of Aspet, and led to some very serious disturbances. A few words relating to this incident will give a sufficiently clear idea of the state of ferment the revolutionary spirit had arrived at.

In a tussle of the gendarmes with a disorderly crowd of loafers and idlers, the Mayor, a retired officer and a knight of the Legion of Honour, had



taken sides against the former ; he had liberated their prisoners, and the gendarmes had in his presence been insulted by the populace and threatened with violence. At the first news of the conflict I hastened to Aspet, escorted by two brigades of gendarmerie and followed closely by a squadron of cavalry. Immediately on my arrival at the Mairie, whither I had been followed by a hooting and angry crowd, I had the Mayor and the leading actors in the scene arrested and conveyed to Saint-Gaudens, the administrative seat of the arrondissement. Scarcely had I got there with them, when a gendarme came to warn me of the attempt to invade the prison and to carry off the prisoners. The squadron of cavalry had not arrived yet ; we had only three brigades of horse gendarmerie to face the storm. To the summons to disperse the mob answered by a shower of projectiles. The Procureur of the Republic was hurt, and a gendarme fell at my side seriously wounded. I ordered the gendarmerie to charge ; and a few moments afterwards the prison and those it held were safe from the enterprise of the rioters. Numerous arrests were made, and severe sentences vindicated the majesty of the law in a few days. Though there were no fewer than four or five thousand adherents of the Mountain in this foolhardy attempt, it was by no means important from a practical point of view ; but it was a grave symptom. It was but too evident that at the first signal every one would be at his post in the ranks of the Revolution, and only too ready to act without weighing the danger incurred by resistance.

If the authorities had not been particularly vigilant, incidents like that of Aspet would have been frequent enough. In Toulouse itself, in spite of its strong garrison, an attempt at insurrection on the most futile pretext had occurred. It had been suppressed without bloodshed, but it showed once more the daring of the demagogues. All these

facts, taken as a whole, proved a source of information to the Government, of which it could not take advantage too quickly.

I by no means hid from the Minister the perils in store for society at the expiration of the Presidential term in 1852. I recommended the greatest vigilance, but left him to find the remedy to the evil I pointed out to him. I did not succeed, perhaps, in sufficiently disguising my idea of the only possible solution; a solution which M. Léon Faucher, a fanatical Parliamentarian, indignantly rejected. Certain it is that I incurred his remonstrances; their severe character compelled me to complain to the Chief of the State. A letter from the Prince, dated 18th July, 1851, afforded me full satisfaction in that respect; it was in his own handwriting, and read as follows:—

ELYSÉE NATIONAL, 18th July, 1851.

“My dear Monsieur de Maupas,

“I regret that you should incur reproach where you deserve nothing but praise. But the most intelligent minds are not perfect, and one must bear with their foibles.

“In any case you may rely upon me, who appreciate at their just worth your loyalty, your personal merits, and your devotion.

“Therefore believe me

“Most affectionally yours,

“LOUIS NAPOLEON.”

Time passed; only a few months separated us from the month of May, 1852. To wait was to increase the danger by giving the enemy time to complete his organization—it became necessary to act. The 22nd July, on the morrow of the throwing out of the Bill for the revision of the Constitution, I pointed out to the Chief of the State the danger of respite. I impressed upon him the necessity for energetic and decisive action. I indicated in all their details the only means to save the country.

All parliamentary and strictly lawful methods were powerless; the country had to be appealed to directly, to be directly entrusted with the care of its own destiny. The Constitution of 1848 provided in its first article that, "The sovereign power is lodged in the collective body of the French citizens." Therefore it was the legal sovereign that should be appealed to, to resolve this important question which preoccupied and agitated the whole of France. No doubt the Constitution did not give the President of the Republic the right to directly consult the country in this plebiscitary form; but salvation lay in this method only, and to apply it no obstacles should be considered. The nation's vote should say whether she intended to absolve or condemn the enterprise.

It was only on the 19th September that the Prince replied; and his language, already so transparent, lent a vast importance to the rumours that were current in well-informed political circles. He said, in fact, that the week previous we had been on the eve of what was conventionally termed the *Coup d'État*, but that dissensions which sprung up at the eleventh hour between those entrusted with its execution had only prevented its realisation.\* Louis Napoleon's letter was not entrusted to the post. On account of its absolutely confidential character, it had been given by him to Count de Campaigno, adjunct to the Mayor of Toulouse, who on his arrival had sent it to me by private messenger to Bagnères-de-Luchon, where I was staying at the moment. From its perusal it will be seen that the Prince's mind was fully made up at this date; he held himself ready to act if circumstances compelled him. Subjoined is his letter.

\* General de Saint-Arnaud, who had the most important rôle in this projected *Coup d'État*, refused his co-operation at the last moment. He was influenced by two reasons: the scheme appeared to him badly conceived, and the devotion of M. Carlier, the then Prefect of Police seemed to him, to say the least, doubtful. Deprived of his chief auxiliary, the Prince had postponed his plan.

ELYSÉE, 19th September, 1851.

“My dear Monsieur de Maupas,—

“I take the opportunity of M. de Campaigno’s departure to remind you of the letter you wrote to me in July. Your advice will receive a favourable solution very soon. I rely upon you at Toulouse to start a salutary movement; but the moment you have accomplished your task in the south you will be called to more important functions, because I feel happy to have men like yourself to aid me in saving the country.

“Pray accept my assurance of profound esteem,  
LOUIS NAPOLEON.”

A very few days afterwards I received from M. Léon Faucher, then Minister of the Interior, a telegraphic message asking me to come to him without delay.

On reaching Paris I found, besides the order of the Minister to repair immediately to his private room, an invitation to dine at St. Cloud for the same evening. The silence of the Minister of the Interior towards me for several weeks warned me that he had some grievance against me. I anticipated the nature of it, and at his first words I knew that I had not been mistaken. After some sententious remarks on the necessity of giving the country to understand that the Government repudiated all idea of a *Coup d’État*, M. Léon Faucher went on to reproach me for not having sufficiently associated myself with that part of the Ministerial policy at Toulouse. “People,” he said, “should not be in the slightest doubt about the attitude of the Ministry.” The prefects who were suspected in their departments of favouring a *Coup d’État* ought to be shifted; he deemed it his duty to propose to the Chief of the State to send me to Montpellier, “where,” he said, making use of the stereotyped expression, “he had need of my services.” It in no way suited me to accept a situation inferior to

the one I occupied. I refused point blank, and assured M. Léon Faucher that except a post equivalent or superior to my present one I should accept nothing. Our parting was icy, and foretold a rupture.

A different reception awaited me at St. Cloud. After dinner the Prince took me into the room next to the drawing-room. "Have you seen Faucher?" he said. "I have just left him, Monseigneur." "Well, what did he say to you?" asked the Prince with a kind of bantering smile. I told him in a few words the conversation I had had with the Minister of the Interior; I alluded to the proposal he had made and my reply to it. "I have another proposal to make to you," resumed the Prince: "will you take the portfolio of the Interior?"

I was little prepared for such an offer. No ambitious thought had entered my mind. My advice to the Chief of the State only aimed at being useful to his cause; I had never dreamed of making it the prelude to political elevation. The Prince failed not to notice my surprise and he developed his idea.

"I fully appreciate the men who serve me at the present moment," he said. "I value their talent; but they think differently from me; they perceive the saving of the country where I see her destruction. To continue to be dragged along by this Assembly, to waste in useless quarrels the time between now and 1852, is to merely march blindly to an inevitable catastrophe. There must be an end of it; we must act; we must at all cost save this unhappy country, which is making straight for a precipice. You have courage and decision; they are the qualities necessary to the coming situation. It is because of this that I have thought of you."

The final thought was easily perceptible through the few reservations in which it was still wrapt up. The mission of an appeal to physical force was



evidently allotted to the Ministry the Prince wished to constitute. But it was not destined to act immediately; there were still certain stages to be gone through; and I wanted to be more fully informed before taking a decision upon so grave a matter. Still, I did not wish to wait till next morning to tell the Prince the first objections that presented themselves to my mind. They were summed up in a few words. Courage and decision were assuredly and above all indispensable to the members of the new Ministry; but if they had to show themselves men of action at a given moment, they had first of all to face difficulties of a different order. Party tactics had reached to a degree of violence in the Assembly such as to make the conflicts of the tribune a necessary and prominent preoccupation for the future. Parliamentary experience and oratorical aptitude were, therefore, qualities of primary importance in the present situation. I could not very well answer for myself in the tribune, seeing that I had never tried. My too rapid preferment, and even my extreme youth, would be severely visited upon me. I was ready to accept an active mission, and of immediate activity; but I felt a dislike to have to go through all the apprenticeship of parliamentary procedure.

It was equally important to me to know the colleagues with whom I was expected to share the grave responsibilities to be entered upon. The Prince only named General de Saint-Arnaud. It was plain that, except the future Minister for War, I was the only one to whom he had confided his intention to change his Cabinet and to give his Government an absolutely new aspect. The strictest secrecy was enjoined and the interview adjourned till the next day.

Next morning, at eleven o'clock, I went back to St. Cloud. After breakfast the Prince invited me to accompany him in his walk in the park, and the conversation of the evening before was resumed.

My first impressions had been confirmed by reflection. I requested at once that the portfolio of the Interior might be given to some one else. I added to my previous observations a consideration which in fact was only the development of the former. The men willing to engage in decisive action were only a small number; it was necessary, therefore, to husband their strength—not to risk its waste in parliamentary struggles before the hour for striking the final blow had come. Hence I asked to remain at Toulouse until the moment when, everything being prepared, the signal for action would be given. But the Prince's determination took a new form; and his plan, which I had easily guessed the night before, was completely disclosed.

We had returned to the Prince's private room; he laid aside all reticence and opened his mind freely.

"The actual situation," he said, "is too strained to continue much longer than a few weeks. If I do not act, my adversaries will forestall me. They have neither sufficient authority to carry the army with them nor the support of public opinion; their attempt to strike a blow would miscarry; civil war would be its inevitable result; this unhappy country would be given up to anarchy; we should see the horrors of '93 enacted over again. There is only my name which carries sufficient weight to reassure the country and influence the army. But I cannot do everything by myself. I want a few resolute men to help me to accomplish my task. A few days ago I wanted to put into execution the plan which I still hope to realise. I was not backed. Differences of opinion as to the best means of executing my plan made it miscarry. But to-day, more than ever, I am resolved to act."

The Prince then explained to me both the plan that had failed and the one he had decided upon. After which, becoming more animated than I

have ever seen him since, he added, almost textually : \*

"I find myself on the bank of a large moat full of water ; it is no doubt difficult to cross, but I perceive on the opposite bank the salvation of my country. To attempt the obstacle by myself would no doubt be a rash enterprise. Get some men to second you, and you will succeed, I am told. Well, those men whom I seek and cannot find, I would say to them : I shall give you the example ; I will place myself at your head, I shall jump into the water first ; but for Heaven's sake follow me, and the country will be saved. Well, my dear M. de Maupas, this is all I have to say to you, and now you know what I expect from your devotion."

A cordial grip of the hand told the Prince that I could not but reply to this thorough confidence save by an assurance of unreserved co-operation.

I must tell the whole truth. During this interview the features of Louis Napoleon, generally so calm, showed traces of deep emotion ; while he was speaking to me tears started to his eyes. You who so outrageously slander this generous nature, believe me that if it had been given to you to listen to these expressions of sincere conviction, far from perceiving an ambitious revelation, you would have recognised the accents of the noblest patriotism in them.

"Seeing that you are determined to act, I am yours," I said to the Prince ; "but let us look at the practical side of the grave question which justly occupies your mind, and waive all personal considerations. What you wish to accomplish is not

\* I was in the habit whenever I was to have the honour of being received by the Chief of the State, to briefly note the different points to be submitted to him. I never failed at the end of the interview to commit its substance to writing. Hence I am enabled to give almost textually the conversation I have reported. On account of its importance, I had taken to record its precise terms immediately on my return to Paris.

an exclusively military act of authority, such as you are being credited with. You do not wish to be proclaimed Emperor by your soldiers; you wish to associate the nation with your enterprise. You wish to owe your authority to her only; you only wish to transgress a dangerous and injurious law to enter immediately within another, salutary and beneficial; you wish civil authority to bear the burden of this enterprise with the military one. If you wish all this, the question becomes a clearly defined one, and I will take the liberty to point out to you its practical side.

“Every change which since the beginning of the century has been accomplished in the government of France was made in Paris; what Paris had done, France has accepted. This time it will be the same. Hence we must occupy ourselves with Paris first of all. Paris is the seat of action and the key to success in one. And in Paris at those critical moments when the destinies of the nation are at stake two forces only share this action and its responsibility—the army and the police. The Prefect of Police disposes of the authority to prevent, and the Minister for War holds in his hand the power to repress. The Minister of the Interior has no direction save in the departments: his rôle only begins when Paris has given its fiat; he only contributes subsequently and passively to the sanction of an accomplished fact, for it is within time-honoured tradition that, while being ostensibly under his orders, the Prefect of Police acts entirely independently of him. Therefore it is upon the Prefecture of Police that the decisive part in the execution of this plan will devolve. The success may depend upon the measures taken by it. And,” I added in conclusion, “in presence of such conjunctures, I ask the Prince to make use of my devotion at the Prefecture of Police.”

At these last words our understanding was complete, and I left Louis Napoleon pledged to

him under conditions which I had myself determined, and which he had pleased to accept with the liveliest expressions of gratitude. I had only made one reservation. I did not care to fill the post of Prefect of Police for any length of time; I only accepted the situation with the express mission to prepare and execute the plan decided upon. The moment events had been accomplished I regained my liberty.

But in this important conversation we had, as it were, anticipated events. The solution of the Ministerial question had not been touched upon; it had only been decided that my nomination should be made known at the same time with the nomination of the new Cabinet.

It was not an easy task to constitute a Cabinet on so ill-defined a field of action as that chosen by the Chief of the State. Negotiations progressed with difficulty. M. de Persigny and Colonel Fleury, both confidants of the Prince, had been mainly charged with them. An understanding was difficult to establish, because the Prince having decided to form only a Ministry of transition, he naturally withheld his real intentions from the men he wished to appoint, and they failed to see a sufficiently defined programme.

The repeal of the law of the 31st May—that was to be the first stage of the campaign. “And then?” asked those who were invited to co-operate. “And then,” answered the President, “we’ll be guided by circumstances.”

The difficulty of forming a Cabinet threatened to overthrow all the plans decided upon between the Prince and myself. I had only accepted the Prefecture of Police on the condition that what was called the *Coup d'État* should be attempted without delay, and at the first favourable opportunity. On the other hand, the Ministers selected, or on the point of being selected, made it an express condition to their acceptance of office that they should



be allowed to set the Chamber's mind at rest against any such attempt. I had been obliged to tell the President that if any such permission was granted them I should have to ask him to absolve me from my promise. I even recommended to him, to take my place at the Prefecture of Police, M. Pietri, the then Prefect of the department of the Ariège, whose devotion was beyond doubt. This was the actual position of affairs. For the last two days I had ceased my visits to St. Cloud, and was already preparing to return to Toulouse, when I received a message to come immediately to the Prince.

The question had again changed its aspect. The men who insisted upon the promise to remain strictly within the law had been given up; a Ministry had been found that did not impose this condition. The Prince remained free, and he fully came back to his original plans. In his idea the Ministry was only one of transition, whose sole mission consisted in asking the repeal of the law of the 31st May. This once done, we would set about business entirely independent of it—General de Saint-Arnaud and myself being the only ones charged with preparations for the grand event and their execution. At last, and after much shifting, they had come back to the only possible decision: a grave one, no doubt, but the legitimate justification and urgent need of which we have already shown, and shall prove again. Under those circumstances I again accepted the Prefecture of Police; and M. Pietri, who on my refusal had been called to Paris, without being aware of the motive, was rewarded for his sudden journey by becoming my successor at Toulouse.

The next day, 26th October, the *Moniteur* published the undermentioned list of the Ministry:

MM. MARQUIS DE TURGOT, Foreign Affairs.  
De THORIGNY, Interior.

MM. CORBIN, Justice.\*

GENERAL DE SAINT-ARNAUD, War.

COUNT DE CASABIANCA, Agriculture and  
Commerce.

BLONDEL, Finances.

LACROSSE, Public Works.

GIRAUD, Public Education.

FOURTOUL, Marine.

DE MAUPAS, Prefect of Police.

At the same time that my nomination appeared in the *Moniteur*, I received from M. de Persigny the following letter :—

“PARIS, Sunday, 26th October, 1851. 11 o'clock.

“I have the pleasure to inform you that by an ordinance of this day the President of the Republic has appointed you Prefect of Police. Enclosed is a list of the new Ministry.

“Pray believe me, &c.,

“F. DE PERSIGNY.”

I quote this letter, though of little importance in itself, to show which was the part taken by M. de Persigny. He recommended the nomination of the principal members of the Cabinet and high functionaries, as the Minister charged with the formation of the Cabinet would have done himself. The Cabinet of the 26th October was in fact almost wholly his work. Thus, in consequence of my refusal to take the portfolio of the Interior, the Prince had given up the idea of having two confidants of his inmost thoughts within the Council itself. General de Saint-Arnaud remained the sole Minister initiated to his plans ; the other depository of his confidence was at the Prefecture of Police.

From this will be seen that the dissensions which had arisen a month before between the Prince and

\* The 1st November, M. Daviel, Procureur-General at Rouen, was called to the Ministry of Justice in lieu of M. Corbin, who had declined.

General de Saint-Arnaud had given place to renewed relations of trust. Colonel Fleury had been the skilful negotiator of this adjustment; and if the young colonel, who became one of the most important personages of the Empire, rendered numerous and eminent services to his sovereign later on, the one he rendered him then must remain the most precious of all. Colonel Fleury, after having given, as it were, to Louis Napoleon a valiant and able general, a man of heart and of action, had now brought him back to the Prince once more.\*

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## CHAPTER XI.

### PLANNING THE COUP D'ÉTAT.

First deliberations at St. Cloud, between the Prince, the Minister for War, and myself.—The *Coup d'État* eventually decided on.—The respective rôles of the Ministry for War and the Prefecture of Police.—M. Carrier's Plans: their worth.—The National Guard.—The true appreciation of this institution.—The plan I proposed.—Preventive measures: their necessities.—The definite plan in view of a *Coup d'État*.

THE Prince had pledged General de Saint-Arnaud and myself to the most absolute secrecy; his categorical command had prohibited all conversation between us on the subject. Did the President fear that an inquisitive and invisible ear might, in spite of ourselves, catch a few words of our conversation? Or did he simply wish all further plans to be determined between us to be first of all submitted to him in our subsequent conferences? Did he wish to avoid the probable accord between his two auxiliaries, regarding it as a possible and

\* We shall show later on how it was Colonel Fleury who pointed out to Louis Napoleon General de Saint-Arnaud as combining more than any other the indispensable qualities for the important function of Minister for War at the decisive moment, and how again it was Colonel Fleury who prevailed on the General to devote himself to the cause of the Prince.

greater difficulty to the adoption of his own plans? At any rate, his recommendation of absolute silence was so peremptory that we considered it imperative to abide by it. During this period of the formation of the Cabinet we had been several times thrown together, but had carefully abstained from all allusions to the confidences of the Prince. It was not our secret, and it was but natural that we should respect his wishes with regard to it, even to the verge of exaggeration.

One evening, when we had dined at St. Cloud and the Prince had had with each of us a private interview on the events of the future, we, General Saint-Arnaud and I, returned to Paris in the same carriage. As was perfectly natural, both our minds were full of the grave subject discussed with the Prince; and the temptation to exchange ideas, to make at least some allusion, would have been pardonable. We remained faithful to our injunction. Still, when we left each other we shook hands in a manner not indulged every day by ordinary folk; but not a word emphasised our mute expression of cordiality; the hand-grip was our sole and tacit show of confidence.

A few days later, and very shortly after the formation of the Cabinet of the 26th October, the Prince, believing the hour of action to be near, summoned us both together, not only to free us from our promise of silence towards each other, but to confer all three, to devise means, and to finally settle our plan. The first words of the interview are present to my memory as if I had only heard them an hour ago. "Have you talked about what I confided to you?" asked the Prince. On our reply in the negative, he thanked us. "Secrecy is the first condition of success; I see that both of you can keep silent," he added.

In this first interview everything was sketched out, but no more. Only such points as allowed of no discussion were settled. It was admitted that

an understanding with the Assembly was impossible, that the present situation could not be prolonged without risk, that an appeal to the country was the only possible way out of the blind alley in which we were imprisoned, and that means must be found to enable the country herself to decide by her own verdict the grave questions pending—those which the Assembly refused to solve.

The Prince had informed us of the machinations of his enemies ; he had specially communicated to us certain reports from which it clearly resulted that General Changarnier, the real leading spirit of the plot against the Elysée, had been on the point of taking the offensive. The danger was becoming imminent ; there was not a moment to lose, because the Chamber resumed its sittings on November 4th, and the excitement was such amongst the most turbulent of the majority, that the most seditious resolutions might be expected. We had to be ready to defend ourselves, to even act spontaneously at the first resumption of the threats and the plans of action of the conspirators of the Chamber. It was agreed that the work of preparation for what was to be done should only be pursued between the Prince, the Minister for War, and the Prefect of Police, and that no member of the Council should be associated with it. Upon the latter would devolve the transaction of current affairs, the debates in the Assembly ; upon us the preparations for decisive action and the fixing of the most opportune day to act. Finally, it was agreed that we should without delay begin the careful study of the means at our disposal, and the conditions in which they could be best employed. Our reports upon these questions would form the subject of our next discussion.

General de Saint-Arnaud was, in view of an armed resistance or aggression, to settle the disposal of his troops, and select for each position the general and the regiments most fit to cope with



the incidents that might occur. In fact, it was a carefully considered plan of battle that had to be settled. In this scheme was to be included not only Paris, but a considerable zone of its environs—Versailles, St. Germain, or, more correctly, all the military forces within a radius of five-and-twenty leagues from the capital.

The experience of the past had taught us, in the first place, not to let the troops occupy the same position for more than a few hours, thereby avoiding all inclinations to fraternise with the population and the fatigue of too prolonged a station. To renew the posts at comparatively frequent intervals was the first condition of safety. To ensure this result the disposal of an effective force thrice as strong as that engaged in a general action was indispensable. With eighteen thousand men the chief strategic points of Paris might be occupied; all possible eventualities in case of uprising could be faced. Hence, to renew, in case of need, all the positions thrice within the twenty-four hours fifty-four thousand men were wanted. Those fifty-four thousand men General de Saint-Arnaud was in a position to collect without arousing attention.

The commissariat was to play a great part also in an eventual struggle. If in our wars with a foreign nation one of the first conditions of success is to have plentiful supplies for our armies—not to let the soldier want for clothes, ammunition, food, or for anything that ensures his comfort and security—assuredly those legitimate wants should be abundantly provided for him in the case of a war in the streets, always a formidable trial to an army.

Face to face with the foreigner the soldier takes no count of his privations; impulse silences all calculations. If he defies hunger and thirst, and throws himself headlong in the strife, he is merely impelled by the over-excitement of patriotism. The great motors of the soul electrify his courage;

he cannot fraternise with the enemy, he can only march against him.

In the war of the street, on the contrary, the temptation to fraternise with the groups that surround him besets the soldier under the most deceptive form. If the mob boldly attack him, the response is short and sweet; but very often, before the struggle begins, the troops remain in position awaiting their final orders, and it is at such times that the most pernicious colloquies are engaged in. Nothing is neglected to gain the sympathies of the trooper.\* His wants are espied and almost forestalled; victuals, clothing, fuel in inclement seasons, everything, is lavished upon him by the people, if the chief has been shortsighted

\* A case not exactly in point, but nevertheless showing the value of M. de Maupas' observations. I quote from Alexandre Dumas' "*Mémoires*;" the great novelist is the hero of his own story. It is an épisode from the Revolution of 1830:—"As we were going to the Place de Grève, we took by the Rue Guénégaud, the Pont-Neuf, and the Quai de l'Horloge. Nothing seemed to stop our progress, somewhat accelerated by the noise of gun and rifle discharge, when on reaching the Quai aux Fleurs, we found ourselves face to face with a whole regiment. It was the 15th Light Infantry. There being no chance of attacking fifteen hundred men with thirty rifles and ammunition for about fifty shots, we came to a stop. Nevertheless, seeing that the soldiery seemed not disposed to take the offensive against us, whilst telling my men to halt, I advanced towards the regiment, my musket shouldered, and making signs that I wished to speak to the officer in charge. A captain came to the front. 'What do you wish, Monsieur?' he asked me. 'A passage for me and my men.' 'Whither are you going?' 'To the Hôtel de Ville.' 'What for?' 'What for! To fight of course.' The captain began to laugh. 'Really, M. Dumas,' he said, 'I did not think you so mad as all that.' 'Ah, you know me,' I replied. 'I was on duty at the Odéon one night when they played *Christine*; I had the pleasure of seeing you there.' 'In that case let us talk like friends,' 'That's what we are doing, I think.' 'Then tell me why I am mad?' 'You are mad because you run the risk of being killed, and because it is not your trade to be killed; you are mad because you ask us to let you pass, which you know very well we shall not do. Besides, look what would happen if we did,' he said, pointing to some poor fellows carried by on a stretcher. 'But then what are you doing here?' I remonstrated. 'A sad thing enough, M. Dumas, our duty. Luckily, the regiment has no other instructions at present than to stop the circulation. We confine ourselves to this, as you see. As long as no one fires on us, we'll fire on nobody. Go and tell this to your men, and let them go

enough to overlook these wants. Good offices are multiplied; women, the children themselves, co-operate in this work of seduction. The trooper lends his ear to the advances of the diplomatist rioter. This soldier, who does not quite so clearly see the duty he is to discharge here as he would on the battle-field, this soldier is told that he should always fight for the welfare of the country and for liberty; the insurrection is invested with the most noble motives; his heart is appealed to; his doubts are aroused, his courage is shaken, his faith is surprised in order to paralyze his action. Once those first bonds of fraternity perfidiously established, he asks himself whether he can reply with bullets to the largess he has received. The soldier who argues ceases to be a safe soldier; and when the chief gives his orders, he finds, first hesitation—then refusal, and finally the defection of his men, who give up their arms to march with those whom they were intended to oppose.

Both in 1830 and 1848 the army had afforded sad instances of this truth. At those periods the supreme power had not been able to surround itself with sufficient troops; and the soldier, compelled to double his efforts in order to supply the deficiency of numbers, without receiving in exchange

home quietly. I pray you to do so, and to use all your influence.' 'I thank you for the advice, Monsieur,' I said, laughing, 'but I doubt whether I have this influence.' With this I prepared to go, when the officer called me back: '*A propos*,' he said, 'when are we to have the *première* of *Antony*? Is not that the title of your new piece?' 'The *première* will be when we have finished this Revolution; because I was told at the Ministry of the Interior that nothing short of a Revolution would wring the permission for my piece from the authorities.' The officer shook his head. 'I am afraid, Monsieur, that the piece will remain in your desk.' 'Well, Captain, I am of a different opinion; so here is my address; pray remind me to send you tickets for the *première* when you see the piece announced.'"

Thus far the narrative of Alexandre Dumas. It seemed to have struck neither the great novelist nor the captain of the 15th Light Infantry that Dumas was virtually a rebel. They had enacted insurrection and talked theatre, like the jolly, light-hearted Frenchmen they were. This sufficed. Comment is unnecessary, especially when the interview is read by the light of M. de Maupas' remarks.—*Trans.*

the material necessities of the struggle—the soldier received from the people what he failed to get from his chiefs: he fraternized instead of fighting; and the dynasty fell without having been able to defend itself.

Such lessons were not to be lost. Quantity was one of the essential conditions: we had it. Supplies of all kinds were also there in abundance. We were to have the most precise instructions upon all those questions at our next meeting.

I, on my side, was to furnish a report on the state of parties, on their forces, on their material resources. I was also to give a summary of the state of public opinion, and specify in terms, as far as possible, our probable position at the moment of action. I had also to draw up a statement of the forces at my disposal and the part I would allot to each; furthermore, to submit a detailed and collective plan of the measures to prevent or to paralyze resistance. To prevent resistance, to stay the explosion, such is ever the task of the Prefecture of Police in troublous moments. What services can it not render in that way, what disasters can it not prevent!

Such were the first items of information to be obtained, as far as the Ministry for War and the Prefecture of Police went. Those principal points were to be examined in common. Each of us fully informed upon all things would find a precious guarantee of safety in the knowledge.

At our second meeting, all that had been indicated was ready; we therefore could give our plans a sufficiently precise shape. General de Saint-Arnaud had found a carefully drawn plan of *arrangements to be taken in the event of a conflict* at the Ministry for War. It had been prepared in the event of contingencies that might surprise the chief power. Save for a few modifications, it could remain the same. General Renaud, a brave and illustrious soldier of our African campaigns, was selected to replace General de Saint-

Arnaud in his command of the 2nd Division, to the left of the Seine; the remaining commands had been given to trusted chiefs—to the Canroberts, Carrelets, Bourgons, Levasseurs, de Courtigis, de Cottés, Sambouls, Foreys, and other valiant generals. From a military point of view, we might have begun immediately. As for the spirit of the army, its commander, General Magnan, answered for it; and his word was as trustworthy as his courage.

The organisation of the different branches of the Prefecture is arranged in so perfect a fashion that a few days suffice to become familiar with this vast administration. Hence I had been able to rapidly acquaint myself with the principal points it was necessary to know. The state of opinion in Paris was the first point to be examined. The mass of well-disposed people of all classes—that is to say, the immense majority—eagerly desired an act that would free them. But, after all, this is but a silent mass; no manifestation ever reveals its sympathies. The various parties, on the contrary, are demonstrative. At that time they had taken deep root; the republican party especially numbered many adherents among the working classes. It was not in Paris that Louis Napoleon's strength lay: therefore, resistance had certainly to be looked forward to; because at the moment when the various parties would see the Prince at work they would combine to bar his progress. Therefore we had to consider and prepare for the struggle. It was at this particular point that the preventive measures to be resolved upon had to be carefully examined; it was the final settlement of the plan for what we must call the *Coup d'Etat*. I also brought my suggestions to the problem.

Like the Minister for War, I had found traces of the past. The plan, or rather the plans, prepared by M. Carlier, my predecessor, in view of a possible *Coup d'Etat* in which he was to co-operate in the



middle of September, had been handed to me at the Prefecture of Police.

Let us first say a few words about a document which M. Carlier had submitted to the Prince. It was not the plan of a *Coup d'État*; it was rather a plan of general direction—a programme, as M. Carlier termed it himself. Its purpose was to find the solution of the crisis by lawful means. It is well to communicate this programme first, before we examine the plans of the *Coup d'État* properly speaking. We transcribe textually.

“Programme handed to M. le Président the 9th September, 1851, by M. Carlier, Prefect of Police:—

“Considering the condition of public affairs, and in order to save social order, which is being imperilled, we must raise the Government standard above all personal and dynastic considerations.

“Only a standard placed on such an elevation can give those who shall defend it the proper conviction, and consequently the strength, courage, and talents necessary to foil the intrigues of the various parties.

“Who would dare, without being hooted, unfurl the flag of a pretender in presence of the flag of France in jeopardy.

“France will belong to him who will drag her out of the painful situation to which she was abandoned in 1848. This great triumph should be the sole preoccupation of the President. If he succeeds, all will be well: neither pretenders, nor the intrigues of coteries, nor hostile parties in the Assembly, will have the least influence in presence of the general impulse.

“To attain this result, the following means should be employed:

“1. To arouse France, who is asleep, by a statement of the perils that threaten her.

“2. To reconstruct the National Guard, in view

of the approaching perils, and proclaim the motive openly.

"3. To form a Ministry with a programme and an aim.

"4. At the opening of the Assembly—

"Manifesto of the President;

"Petition for a law on the permission to reside in Paris;\*

"Petition for the proclamation of the state of siege during the elections.

"These measures will have the effect of altering people's ideas; they will embarrass intriguers, and foil their schemes.

"If these plans be adopted, all the honour of them will belong to the President. The country will not be mistaken; by the natural logic of things, she will carry her affection and her vote to the able and determined Chief of the State who will have brought the country out of a crisis more difficult than any which France has ever experienced.

"If, on the contrary, the Assembly refuses to grant the President the means to save the country, beset with fear, this Assembly will no longer be reckoned among the powers of the State. I do not mention the contingency of a probable insurrection if those measures were adopted; because it may be taken for granted that the Government will not be caught unawares. The National Guard, the army, and all the living forces of France, will uprise with enthusiasm to defend it, and to make an end of demagogy."

M. Carlier had always manifested sufficiently strong dislikes to pledge his responsibility in the furtherance of a *Coup d'État*. Would the programme we have just read have removed this difficulty? Would its application have led to a

\* This law was in fact passed in 1851, for foreigners as well as natives. It is now abrogated and only applies to ticket-of-leave men and others, under the surveillance of the police.—*Trans.*

satisfactory result? Would it, as he said, save "the social order which is being imperilled"?

One might, on the contrary, affirm that it would have gravely compromised it.

The least that can be said of this programme is that its exposition was nebulous and emphatic, and that it in no way looked at the real aspect of the question. Was it not rather a mere subterfuge to escape the responsibility of a *Coup d'État*?

"To arouse France, who is asleep." But France was everywhere very wide awake indeed, and particularly aware of the perils that threatened her.

"To reconstruct the National Guard." It would have been simply reorganizing resistance and disciplining the revolt.

"To proclaim the motive openly." It was tantamount to throwing the peaceable part of the Paris population into the profoundest state of alarm.

"To form a Ministry with a programme and an aim." Which aim? and where would be found the means to attain it? If lawful means became insufficient to vanquish the obstacles, to what measures would one have to resort to attain the aim? Might one go as far as the *Coup d'Etat* if deliverance could be got in no other way? But this feasible part of the programme, could it be entrusted to a Ministry in its entirety? So important a secret, given up to ten individuals at once, would it be strictly kept?

"To proclaim the state of siege during the elections." The merits of this measure were undeniable; its advantages were dependent upon a number of incidents that could not be appreciated prospectively.

"The law on the permission to reside in Paris." There was nothing to say against it; but a similar question had only a distant connection with the decisions of a much higher order that claimed the present attention.

But "to reconstruct the National Guard"? This part of the programme was so far removed from the necessities of the hour, that one felt tempted to ask for whose benefit M. Carlier meant to act. What, in fact, is the spirit of this modern institution—what is its most logical end in view? What aid can be expected, or rather what perils may not be apprehended, from it?

The National Guard is the population armed: almost ever useless for the purpose of repression, most often detrimental to the supreme power. It is an army which argues on the fitness of taking up arms, which discusses the conditions of its engagements, which bargains with its co-operation, which in the heat of action itself criticises instead of obeying, places considerations of prudence above courage. Is it not an embarrassing cohort rather than an army? Nay, more, it is a constant peril even more than an embarrassment—a peril in itself, a peril in the way of example; a peril in itself, because one can never make sure that the weapons of those citizen soldiers may not be turned against their commanders; a peril in the way of example, because such a militia may at any moment communicate to the real army its hesitations, its fears, and cause the latter to forget its duty, to betray its trust.

The National Guard of 1830 and 1848 afforded this sad spectacle. Instead of supporting the throne, it joined the rioters; in fact, it took the lead in the movement, and by so doing ensured the triumph of the Revolution. The National Guard at the moment of political crises is nothing else but universal suffrage provided with the means of rendering itself justice; it is the voting-paper replaced by a bayonet and a cannon. We may go farther still, and say that even in those days when the sympathies of the National Guard would prompt it to sincerely defend the supreme power, its co-operation would prove useless. The war of the streets requires, more

than any other, exceptional staying powers and consummate experience of the rules of warfare. One must not expect to find those qualities in a shop-keeper, a merchant, or a workman, dubbed soldier for the nonce. Neither must we expect the father of a family to expose to the chances of war an existence which first of all belongs to his kindred. This painful trial of a civil war—it is the regular army that must bear it; because it does so valiantly each time that its chiefs know how to direct it, when it needs no other aid to conquer.

Therefore, to reconstruct the National Guard would have been to deprive ourselves gratuitously of the unfettered direction of a possible military movement, and to abandon its fate, as well as that of the country, to the whims of a population inconstant in her preferences as well as her decisions.

The Prince had judged the programme of M. Carlier, as it deserved to be judged, as an impossible dream. He had requested him to study more carefully and directly the necessities by which they were confronted, and to submit to him, not a prospective programme, but a plan of immediate action—a plan for a *Coup d'État*. The very next day M. Carlier had brought the new plan demanded of him.

This plan was conceived in view of two different contingencies. It dealt with a possible *Coup d'État* during the vacation, and consequently in the absence of the Assembly; it dealt also with the possible action whilst the Assembly was sitting. The methods did not differ materially on either hypothesis. The plan was exceedingly simple.

In case of action during the vacation, a decree of the President of the Republic pronouncing the dissolution of the Assembly was to be posted up on a certain day throughout the whole of France—it was to be posted in open daylight. In Paris, the army, under marching orders, should occupy its posts of observation and act in case of uprising. The great



mistake of this combination was to see no danger elsewhere than in the capital; and this exclusive preoccupation overlooked other perils more difficult to overcome—in fact, the most serious that might arise.

Would not the members of the Assembly, scattered all over the provinces, have grouped themselves on several points, attempted some organisation and made an appeal to the military forces? They would have had with them the generals-deputies; they would have succeeded in constituting centres of government possessing all the necessary elements to enforce obedience. This would have been nothing less than civil war. It required a strong dose of optimism to fail to see the evidence of this; nevertheless the dose was there.

But most eyes were opened at last; and the 17th September, the very day fixed for its execution, this rash enterprise was abandoned. It was General de Saint-Arnaud who was the chief cause of the miscarriage of this first plan in which he was to play the principal part. He saw the peril of it, and firmly declared that, while willing to co-operate in any act carefully and prudently conceived, he refused to engage in so foolhardy an attempt. What service did not he render both to the country and to the Prince by acting as he did! According to the second combination of M. Carlier's plan, the attempt was to be made immediately after the re-opening of the Assembly; everything was to be arranged as in the former case. The proclamations and decretals of the President of the Republic were to be posted on the walls of Paris before the hour of meeting of the Chamber; the soldiery was to be on foot and the police on the watch.

In both cases, however, some preventive measures had been suggested by M. Carlier. Two hours before the posting up of the placards, he was to arrest the chiefs of the secret societies and the

leaders of the demagogues: he was perfectly familiar with the whole of the gang, and the list of them which he left behind proved of real service on the 2nd December. No doubt M. Carlier foresaw resistance; he deemed an appeal to arms very possible if the acclamations of the first few hours did not discourage the adversaries of the Prince; but he considered this very resistance as a favourable circumstance rather than as a cause for anxiety. Repression would be more energetic; the rebellion would be crushed; and, while relinquishing the glory of a victory won through enthusiasm, one would have the consolation of a success gained by force. This last plan was as much the Prince's as M. Carlier's, who in his drafting of it had acted upon the principal instructions from the Chief of the State.

As has doubtlessly been perceived by now, the starting point of this plan was confidence in the Paris population, confidence in the army, confidence in the popularity of Louis Napoleon, and at the same time a conviction of the want of popularity of the Assembly, and of the impotency of the generals-deputies to exercise the slightest influence on the troops. Such an appreciation of the situation contained many and serious errors. What cruel disappointments, what terrible catastrophes, would have been the result, if such chimerical illusions had been taken as the basis for action! General de Saint-Arnaud and I were of the same opinion in that respect; and on no consideration should we have consented to engage our responsibilities in such an adventure.

As for me, I counted neither upon the disposition of the Paris population (or rather of its restless population), because I took their hostility for granted, nor upon Louis Napoleon's popularity in the capital, which, I believed to be very limited, nor on the want of popularity of the Assembly, whose persecution would gain adherents to it; nor on the

impotency of the generals-deputies who might be able to gain over some regiments.

The Prince clung to his first convictions. He had a blind faith in the power which the name of Napoleon exercised on the people; he was conscious of wishing nought but the country's welfare; and he was inclined to think that the masses, appreciating the sincerity of his intention, would applaud his enterprise. He felt, as it were, a kind of vanity in owing his success to his popularity only.

In this kind of conjunctures probabilities should only be accepted as problematical odd money. Prudence enjoins one, on the contrary, to carefully examine the critical turns events may take. It is well, no doubt, to have faith in our success: it is a condition of strength. But a positive mind is bound to place side by side with this confidence the prescience of unavoidable difficulties, of temporary reverses, of mistakes inseparable from all human enterprise. Amidst all the illusions with which the Prince had been lulled to sleep, and which he had shared, I saw but one element of reality, and even that a conditional one—a steadfast army. The approval of the majority of well-disposed people was no doubt to be hoped for; but (we have said it already) this altogether platonic approbation amounted, after all, to nothing more than a moral force.

To prevent, within the measure of the possible, all attempt at resistance, at insurrection—or at least to circumscribe its influence and the perils to which it might lead—such was my intention; and everything in my plan tended towards that end.

The question of the arrest of the generals-deputies, as a matter of precaution, had been discussed in September at St. Cloud with M. Carlier, when it had been decided in the negative. Surely he could not have remembered the eminence of their services to make so light of the influence they might wield

over the army in a moment of surprise. Several of the regiments of the Paris garrison had been under their command; the coincidence should not be overlooked. If only one regiment had accepted their direction, and turned its arms against the Prince, what dire complications might not have been the result? Where would this scission in the army have stopped? Would not the struggle have assumed the most horrible character? It would no longer have been the war of the streets, the struggle of an army against the rioters, it would have been civil war in its most sombre aspect, in its most terrible conditions—army against army: that is to say, on both sides bravery, courage, the organisation and science of warfare. In such a war there is no counting the dead. It was this immense loss of life that had to be averted from the country at any cost. The most easy precautions, the most elementary and lawful measures, could paralyze resistance and leave the army to its duty, its orders, and its chiefs. However harsh this extremity might be, the generals-deputies must be prevented from acting; and to obtain this result there was but one alternative—to secure their persons for the time being. The interest of the country, nay, their own interests, made this alternative a necessity. In this way the temptation to incite the army to forget its foremost duty, obedience to its hierarchical chiefs, would be spared to them; their inaction was explained by the sole excuse they could accept—the disposal of their liberty. We may be allowed to say, however, that the arrest of the generals was a right and an absolutely lawful act. They were all in verbal and active communion with General Changarnier. The plot of which he was the soul had them for principal auxiliaries; and as such they incurred the penalties of the law.

It is necessary to add that no other thought than that of averting the peril had inspired those measures. When engaging in so tremendous an

enterprise one is inspired by the conviction of duty ; and the first obligation that forces itself upon the conscience is to neglect nothing that can ensure success. Hence, those who had contributed most to make the crisis of the 2nd December inevitable were to be the first victims of its rigour. But they had to blame themselves rather than us. If the love of country had dominated their party spirit, they would have lent a more attentive ear to the anxious clamour of the nation ; they would have recognised that the Prince alone possessed her confidence ; they would have striven to make his re-election lawfully possible ; and through them the Constitution would have sanctioned that which could now only be obtained by force.

The recollection of the past had not been without its influence on our decisions in the measures thus resolved upon. The situation forced upon the Prince in 1851 by the violent hostility of the Assembly recalled in more respects than one the situation forced in 1830 and 1848 upon the Governments of the time by the virulent attacks of the Chamber of Deputies. If in 1830 the Monarchy, which was informed of everything that was being plotted against it, had had less consideration for its enemies—if it had proceeded by energetic preventive measures, if on the eve of action it had laid its hands on the chief movers in the conspiracy—deputies of the Left, journalists, and leaders of secret societies—it would undoubtedly have paralyzed the recourse to arms, averted the Revolution, and thus have rendered an immense service to the country.

The same if, in 1848, the Government of King Louis Philippe had listened to the repeated and urgent warnings of the Prefect of Police, the honourable M. Delessert—who warned them that the Revolution was imminent, who disclosed its doings, pointed out its chiefs—if the then Government had arrested the leaders of the Extreme Left, the heads of those self-same secret societies, some



of the most turbulent among the National Guards, the revolt, frustrated, assailed in its very organization, would not have dared lift its head on the 24th February. France would have this time also escaped the horrors of the Revolution, and King Louis Philippe would have kept his crown.

It was but natural that these lessons should not be lost upon us. In presence of analogous perils, our attitude was bound to differ essentially from that taken by the Governments of 1830 and 1848. Instead of remaining in a condition of dangerous procrastination, we went straight to the enemy, and by energetic measures shattered his strength and disabled his attempts beforehand.

The Prince, in spite of his dislike to accept the method of preventive measures, had ended by accepting our plans, and an understanding had been come to with regard to the arrest of the generals, as well as with regard to several other decisions dictated by prudent foresight.

Our first conferences had, therefore, disposed of the most important questions; in our subsequent discussions the various other details of the plan I had suggested were successively adopted. They may be summed up here:—

From three to four in the morning, successive reception in my private room of the commissaries of police to give them their instructions.

From five to half-past five departure of said commissaries, accompanied by the whole of the *personnel* required for their support.

At half-past five, occupation of the palace of the Assembly by a regiment to be selected by the Minister for War.

At six, arrest of the generals-deputies, and other representatives considered as the most dangerous.

Equally at six, arrest of the chiefs of the secret societies, and such democrats as were known for the violence of their opinions.

At ten minutes past six, occupation by the pickets of the Republican Guard of the posts indicated, in the immediate neighbourhood of the houses where arrests were being made.

At half-past six, delivery at the Prefecture of Police by Colonel de Béville and the director of the national printing works of the proclamations, and various other placards.

At half-past six, simultaneous occupation by the troops of the strategical positions.

At a quarter to seven, posting of the following placards:

1. Decree of the President of the Republic dissolving the Assembly.
2. Proclamation of Louis Napoleon to the French nation, entitled "Appeal to the People."
3. Proclamation of the President of the Republic to the army.
4. Proclamation of the Prefect of Police to the inhabitants of Paris.

By seven o'clock everything was to be finished. Nothing more would have to be done but to await the reports of the commissaries of police, superintendents, and agents posted at the most important points of observation of the capital.

At eight o'clock the Minister of the Interior was to send to all the prefects the decree of dissolution, the proclamations, and a summary of what had already transpired. Thus everything was foreseen, arranged hour by hour, minute by minute; and each of us could, by taking note of the resolutions decided upon, follow the march of events step by step the moment it became necessary.

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## CHAPTER XII.

## THE MINISTRY OF THE COUP D'ÉTAT.

Discussion of the Bases of the future Constitution.—The principles of Louis Napoleon.—The preferences of General de Saint-Arnaud and mine.—Necessity of a temporary Dictatorship.—The question of the Ministry of the *Coup d'État*.—The Prince's resistance.—The part he wished M. de Persigny to play.—The efforts of M. de Morny to get the Ministry of the Interior.—Our conference at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.—The presentiments of the ex-King of Westphalia.—The Mission he confides to me to the Chief of the State.

It was not sufficient to arrange everything for the period of action: we had to consider what should be done with the country after the success, a success of which no one doubted. General de Saint-Arnaud and myself were ready enough to admit that the first thing to do was to drag the country from this state of anarchy. But in favour of which form of government was this movement to be accomplished? We were entitled to concern ourselves with this—to interrogate the Prince, and to discuss this foremost question.

The form of government itself had not to be discussed, the Prince having declared from the beginning that he meant to propose the continuance of the Republic to the nation. But what would be the constitutional régime of this new Republic? That was the problem that might divide the most intelligent and law-abiding of the nation.

The Constitution of the Year VIII.\* appealed strongly to Louis Napoleon's predilections. He looked upon some of its provisions as a prudent equilibrium between the principles of authority and

\* Supposed to be the work of Sieyès, and drawn up after the *Coup d'État* of the 18th Brumaire. Promulgated 24th Frimaire, in the eighth year of the First Republic (Republican Calendar), corresponding to the Gregorian date of 15th December, 1799.—*Trans.*

liberty. By imparting to it such modifications as were required by altered times and circumstances, he considered it suitable to the principal necessities of the crisis through which France was passing. Its general plan was good: it offended the convictions of none of us; on the contrary, it might afford us a possible satisfaction. We had neither the leisure nor the necessary competence to frame by ourselves the constitutional pact; it would have been anticipating the future. The task would be reserved to a special commission of the most eminent jurists, perhaps to the Assemblies themselves. In this first interchange of our impressions it was easy enough to distinguish our respective tendencies.

The Prince, while wishing to establish the principle of authority most solidly on the very summit, inclined to broad concessions to the principles of democracy. In spite of the difficulty of dovetailing the two, this was the aim pursued by Louis Napoleon; his writings bore witness to this idea, and he was anxious to put it into practice. He showed himself then what he has always shown himself—a dictatorial democrat. He more than once had occasion to perceive the danger of some of his ideas.

It was not difficult to tell General de Saint-Arnaud's principal bias. He felt the influence which the habit of military command exercises on the mind. He was neither democrat nor parliamentarian; he was a pure and simple autocrat; he wanted a régime of absolute power, without having much considered the conditions in which it had to be exercised.

Neither were the representative doctrines much in favour then among the Conservatives. Their abuse by the Assembly had caused them to be looked upon with serious prejudice. The particularly transient situation through which we were passing, and the agitation that survived the revolutionary crisis, were not sufficiently considered.

Therefore it was only in the most guarded terms that I could offer some suggestions—not in favour of the Parliamentary régime proper (I took care to make some reservations with regard to it), but in favour of a régime of serious control, the form of which would be examined eventually. I did not point out the degree in which an elective representation of the nation ought to participate in the governmental mechanism; I merely indicated in a general way that side by side with the supreme power the real control by the Assemblies should find its place. The Prince by no means rejected this starting-point. Let us note, by the way, that the efficiency of a similar régime must depend on the use made of it. Besides, the Prince declared that, whatsoever the Constitution to be given to the nation, it should not be final, but be left open to improvement. In that way every reservation for the future was made.

As for the present, hesitation was out of the question. After the disturbances of all kinds to which our unhappy country had been a prey, in presence of the agitations and divisions that still prevailed, a dictatorship was a necessity for the time being. We all three partook of this conviction.

In fact, when great social and political disorders have occurred in a country, they fatally leave a long ground swell behind. There are no victors without vanquished; resignation is by no means the first feeling after defeat; the thirst for revenge occupies the foremost place. Only time and repose can bring a spirit of sacrifice. To accelerate its return, the last germ of the struggle should be carefully removed, the least discussion carefully avoided, the smallest hostile publication strenuously prevented, all tendency to retaliation vigorously guarded against. In one word, some one must assume the mastership, in such a way as to dominate the situation and to make the nation aware of it. It is by a dictatorship that this result is



obtained. The more troublous the times, the more this exception is justified. Only wisdom and moderation in the application of authority will make a similar power acceptable without complaint. The violent perturbations in the lives of peoples have at all times brought the dictatorship in their wake. According to the times and the peoples, it became omnipotent or limited in its rights. Its names have varied; but its origin and its effects have never ceased to be the same. In our days the mildest incarnation of the dictatorship has been, and still is called the state of siege—which, truly speaking, admits only of a limited and previously resolved application of this exceptional régime.

Amongst the Romans the dictatorship was not, as in modern times, a fortuitous act, a recuperative incident rendered necessary in consequence of violent revolutionary shocks, in order to afford the country the opportunity of recovering her composure and reason, previous to entering upon a new and regular period; among the Romans the dictatorship attained the dignity of an institution. It was, in presence of the perilous complications at home and abroad, the legal resource wherewith to save the country, or at least to guard her against formidable trials. The dictatorship has been most often a source of benefits to the Romans, hence they frequently recurred to it; they professed a deep veneration for the dictator, and submitted without reserve and without murmur to his authority.\*

In our days also the dictatorship was fruitful in benefits; that of Napoleon I. and that of Napoleon III., of which we shall have to speak later on, will leave the recollection of great services rendered,

\* The Roman dictatorship assumed various forms. It was most often what it is in our days, the concentration into one hand of all the powers of the State. Sometimes it assumed a more extended form. It was thus that the powers conferred upon Augustus allowed him to substitute the imperial régime for the republican constitution, rendered ineffectual by anarchy.

because they delivered the country from anarchy and gave to France a regular Government.\*

The Prince, enamoured as he was of authority, only contemplated assuming the dictatorship for a limited period. He did not make light of the responsibility it entails, and he would gladly accept the establishing of a constitutional régime based upon the will of the nation. Hence the dissensions between us on those essential questions, on the régime which to give or rather to propose to France, were only prospective; for the present there was a thorough understanding.

On another point of minor importance, but which, nevertheless, offered a lively interest, an understanding had not been so easily arrived at. In fact, there still remained in our preliminary arrangements a lamentable gap. There was, for the day of the *Coup d'État*, neither a Ministry decided upon, nor a Ministry in contemplation. I had not ceased to insist strenuously upon the ministerial question being provided for, as much as possible, before the turn of events; it would have been an error to gratuitously deprive ourselves of at least the semblance of a constituted power, and to deny the country the time-honoured satisfaction of seeing the new government present itself with its Ministry, with a Cabinet in due form.

In France the word Cabinet had for a long time, and by itself, signified Government, because in public opinion the Cabinet was in fact its most living formula, and this impression was the natural heritage of the parliamentary period. In those days when some grave crisis came to trouble the country, the formation of a new Cabinet was considered the remedy for the evil, the concession which was to lay the storm. It is through having

\* The only dictatorships of this century were those of Napoleon I. and of Napoleon III. The temporary usurpations of the power, which in 1848 and 1870 sprang from riots, cannot be dignified by the name of dictatorship.

opportunately changed his Ministry on the 12th May that Louis Philippe escaped in 1832 the fate in store for him in 1848. It is through having delayed the change of Ministry on the 22nd February, it is through having withheld too long the firing of this constitutional battery, that his dynasty fell. In fact, let us remember that public opinion only demanded on the first day of the revolution of 1848 the dismissal of a Ministry that had become unpopular notwithstanding its signal merits. But the refusal of this satisfaction incensed the masses, they became accessible to every influence, refused to listen to any compromise, and overthrew the throne, as it were, to punish the King for not having sent away his ministers.

We were not sufficiently distant from this period of ministerial prestige to neglect the additional benefit of this force, and if we could not hope for much from the prestige of individuals we might at least count upon the prestige of the institution.

On this point the Prince eluded my persistent inquiries by evasive answers. But the little I was enabled to gather from his views in that respect made me suppose that we were swayed by the same impressions. Only the difficulties connected with individuals obstructed his plans.

There were no doubt many embarrassing obstacles to the formation of a Cabinet willing, as a whole, to accept beforehand, and under conditions comparatively undecided, its part of the responsibility of a *Coup d'État*. One had, first of all, to find ten devoted and determined men, mutually suited, inspired by the reciprocal confidence which, if useful under ordinary circumstances, becomes indispensable in grave conjunctures. To inform them beforehand of the event which was to inaugurate their accession to office was to jeopardize one of the chief elements of the success of the enterprise; namely, secrecy. To withhold this confidence, to reserve to them the surprise of their

exalted mission, was to expose one's self to faltering, which, supervening in the first hours of events, might lead to disastrous complications.

Let us say here, in order to precisely indicate the part allotted to each by the Prince in his confidential communications relative to his plans for the *Coup d'État*, that if he felt unwilling to divulge his designs to the political men who generally enjoyed his confidence, he continued, nevertheless, to discuss his projects and their execution with his two trusted familiars, Colonel Fleury and M. de Persigny. But those two auxiliaries were so identified with the Prince himself that it might safely be said that they formed but one and the self-same individual. In disclosing his most secret thoughts to them Louis Napoleon could still say to himself that his secret remained his and his only.

There was, however, one indirect way, if not to constitute a Cabinet, which as yet would have been premature, to at least secure, in an almost certain manner, the co-operation of men whose word could be relied upon. One must return in imagination to this period, to gain an idea of the nature of such negotiations. If the Prince, who blamed himself for having been too trusting, during the period of preparation for the *Coup d'État* of the 17th September, remained silent this time on the reality of his projects, on his plan, on the date of a possible action, he allowed certain privileged persons to expatiate before him on the necessity of a *Coup d'État*. Without admitting anything that might compromise him, he often went as far as to question. This was notably the case with MM. de Morny and Rouher, who on the 17th September had been the confidants of his plans, as well as with MM. Abbaticci, de Turgot, de Casabianca, Fourtoul, Bineau, Ducos, Baron van Heeckeren and a few others. Each of them might say well enough, "I have spoken to the President of the necessity of a *Coup d'État*." None of them had the right to say,

“The President contemplates a *Coup d'État*, he has told me of his plans.” And in justice be it said no one indulged such talk. Might not the Prince at a given day reply to the recommendations to act, to the offers of service which he could easily provoke without divulging anything himself, by a simple interrogation or else by an eventual challenge to make good their professions. He knew the limited number of men from which he might choose sufficiently well to invest each reply with the value they liked to put upon it. Undoubtedly if he could not constitute a Cabinet in this way, as he might have done in ordinary times, he could at least secure the co-operation of a sufficient number to form a Cabinet on the day of action. If nothing more could be done, it was at least as well to have the assurance and confidence of being able to form instantaneously at a given moment an almost complete Ministry.

The President had so often been abandoned by those upon whom he thought he could rely, that his dislike to fresh overtures was perfectly natural; but we repeat, he might in this instance remain content with indirect steps. Nevertheless he had made some attempts, and if not hindered by ties of various natures, he would have found his men. MM. Marquis de Turgot, Count de Casabianca, de Saint-Arnaud, and Fourtoul, members of the Cabinet that would expire the 2nd December, were ready to follow him in any enterprise. M. Bineau loudly demanded the *Coup d'État*, he offered his co-operation unconditionally; M. de Morny, who for a long time had indicated himself as Minister of the Interior, and M. de Persigny, could have made up the Cabinet.

M. de Morny, in the interviews which he forced upon the Prince, more often than the latter could have wished, showed himself the indefatigable intermediary of a Fould, Rouher, and Magne combination; he strenuously opposed the admission to



the new Ministry of M. Bineau and of the Members of the still-existing Cabinet, and it was by persuading the Prince that it was better to wait a day longer, in order to have accredited Ministers like MM. Fould, Magne, and Rouher, that M. de Morny succeeded in hindering the formation of a Ministry.

The adjournment tallied, moreover, with one of the fixed decisions of the President—he wished M. de Persigny to be one of the Members of the Ministry of the *Coup d'État*; he was aware of all the resistance the name would encounter from MM. Fould and de Morny, and he expected to impose the name more easily after than on the eve of the struggle. Consequently it was agreed that the formation of the Cabinet would be adjourned until the morning of the 2nd December.

The choice of the Minister of the Interior had preoccupied the President for a long while already. M. de Morny bestirred himself very actively to obtain this post, but the President felt evidently disinclined to entrust him with it. His sentiments towards M. de Morny were strangely mixed. At times apparently intimate, at others markedly distant, but even in the best days of their intercourse, extreme mistrust on the part of the Prince.

M. de Morny became more tenacious in proportion to his growing belief in some hesitation on the part of the Prince. He wanted to become Minister at all costs. Perhaps he could have done so in the time of the Assembly; but he was conscious of the inferiority he would have shown in the tribune. His qualities were not of the order required first and foremost in a Parliamentary Government. He lacked the oratorical gifts, and confronted, as Minister, by an Assembly, he would have exposed himself to an inevitable check. His own tact had prompted him to reserve himself for a Ministry of silence and of action, in which events would have caused his chief merit, courage, to stand out. It

was, therefore, a capital point of his ambition to obtain the portfolio of the Interior on the 2nd December. He was uneasy at the reticence the Prince showed towards him each time that he urged the latter to have done with the Assembly. He was too watchful of everything that occurred not to foresee events. The Prince did not absolutely deny to him that he had made up his mind to a *Coup d'État*, but he was particularly anxious that this time, and until the eleventh hour, its plan and the day should be kept from M. de Morny, whose habit of speculating and gambling on the stock exchange, made the Prince afraid that the secrets of the State would find their way to quarters where it was important that they should not be compromised.

Being in company one evening with M. de Morny at the Marquis de Turgot's, I was enabled to appreciate his anxiety and to fathom his ignorance of the plans of the *Coup d'État* in spite of his affectation of being kept informed of everything. "My fear," he said to me, "is lest the extreme confidence of the President prove his loss; he wishes to make his popularity the starting-point of his success. But in Paris he must not rely upon enthusiasm; what he wants is bayonets and a goodly number of arrests." To him who watched things closely, this doctrine was but very elementary. M. de Morny was well aware that such was my opinion, and his language was only meant to make of this community of sentiments the transition to a confidence, which to his great regret failed to come.

M. de Morny was not the only one among the political surroundings of the Prince whose eager wish it was to be initiated to his exact plans. In Louis Napoleon's family itself the excitement became extreme. I can testify to the exceedingly great preoccupations of Prince Jérôme, the ex-King of Westphalia, the last surviving brother of Napoleon I. With his vast experience Prince Jérôme,

though at no moment admitted to the confidence of his nephew, felt beyond the possibility of doubt that the day was drawing near for the restoration which was to reward the Bonaparte family for the poignant trials of exile. Several times I had to be on my guard against those intimate conversations in which the relations hoped to betray me into some revelations of our projects. Prince Jérôme, above all, appreciated the situation thoroughly, and saw with exceeding grief that his co-operation was not invited to events he felt to be very near. But his great affection for his son, Napoleon, made him blind to the faults of this young prince; he had too eagerly espoused the latter's resentments, and a rupture with the President had been the result; hence he was absolutely kept out of the affairs of the State.

Grave circumstances often favour the adjustment of family differences. I was enabled to prove it on this occasion. The 28th November, Prince Jérôme sent word whether I could come to him; a serious indisposition obliged him to keep to his apartment, and he wished to speak to me on some important subjects. A few hours afterwards I was by the bedside of the august sufferer. I immediately perceived that he had selected me to be the intermediary of a reconciliation with his nephew. I listened to the recital of his grievances; I was obliged to go through the whole of the correspondence between himself and the President with him, the terms of which fully explained the rupture. "This situation," said Prince Jérôme to me, "must not be prolonged in presence of the events that are being prepared. I do not ask you for your secrets, you would be right in refusing to give them, but before eight days are over, my nephew will have made his *Coup d'État*; circumstances compel him to it, and his courage will happily inspire him. I have served the Empire to its last hour; I wish the first day of the new reign of our dynasty to find

me, as its first soldier, at the post of danger. The day of the *Coup d'État* the Prince will present himself to the people, the brother of the Emperor must be by his side. Your situation points you out as possessing all his confidence. I pray you go and see my nephew; he has an excellent heart, I know him well; tell him all that has passed between us. You will easily find out under what conditions our good understanding may be restored. As for me, I give you unconditional power. I will overlook my age and my antecedents to consider nothing but the happiness of seeing peace restored to our family. Let me be certain of a friendly reception at the Elysée, and though I have not forgotten that if I no longer visit my nephew it is because he expressed his wish to this effect, I will make the first advance—I give you leave to tell him so."

A few minutes after this interview I communicated its particulars to the Prince-President, and from his first words I gathered that his affection for his uncle would make my task very easy. It was soon arranged that the Prince on the morning of the *Coup d'État* would write to Prince Jérôme to meet him on horseback at a certain hour at the Elysée. This letter would, even more than the old King of Westphalia expected—one lives on memories when the reality is gone—spare his susceptibilities with regard to his age and antecedents, which he was never weary of putting forward.

In fact, on the morning of the 2nd December we shall see King Jérôme on horseback by the side of the Prince, his nephew. As King Jérôme had so justly foreseen, the day of solution was near. The time for the meeting of the Assembly had arrived. Our conferences were suspended for some days. All the questions of chief importance had been decided, only that of the subsequent Ministry remained in abeyance. General de Saint-Arnaud and I had only personal interviews with the Chief of the State. Our attention was taken up with

what was being done in preparation for the first sittings of the Assembly; in fact, we shall see the formidable questions that were to be discussed by it, and the violent emotions into which the country was thrown by its debates.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE BILL OF THE QUAESTORS.\*

The Government proposes the repeal of the law of the 31st May.—Debates on the throwing out of the bill.—The bill called "the Quaestors'"; its drift and its import.—The origin of the question.—General Changarnier's police.—A word about the secret police.—Our plans in the event of the Quaestors' Bill being voted.—M. Vitet's report.—The sitting of the 17th November.—General Bedeau's interpellation.—Our meeting at the Tuileries.—Throwing out of the "Quaestors' Bill."—To what contradictions Generals Cavaignac and Changarnier were reduced.—The attitude which circumstances imposed upon the Monarchical parties.

FAR from having found in the few weeks' rest it had taken and in the contact with the populations of the departments the appeasement of its ardour, the Assembly came back animated by a most bitter spirit. A prey to feverish excitement, it scarcely cared to hide its seditious projects. It felt incensed at seeing public opinion so manifestly favourable to Louis Napoleon and so hostile to the Assembly.

\* The quaestors, to the number of three under a republican régime, are charged with the stewardship and monetary concerns of the Chamber of Deputies. Now and then their jurisdiction is productive of very comic incidents, as when Quaestor Baze, a few years ago, put a stop to the drinking of high-priced wine and luxurious dining of the deputies at the expense of the nation. Members pay five francs a month for their refreshments, and are entitled for that amount to eat and drink as much as they please in the way of cakes, sandwiches, and light beverages. But sumptuous dining, except at their own expense, is a thing of the past. Those who like anything more substantial than cakes, or something stronger than syrups, tea, and ordinary claret must sacrifice some of their pay, which is 700 francs a month for deputies.—*Trans.*



Nothing but the most violent resolutions and even rash enterprises perhaps could be expected.

The Message of the Chief of the State roused the irritation of some of the members of the majority to a boiling point. The Prince gave notice of a bill to repeal the law of the 31st May, and he made his Message the true exposition of his motives for the bill. To that part of the majority which cherished the hope to make the Mountain the instrument for resisting the Prince, this proved a fatal obstacle; because the division between the Lefts and the Rights being inevitable on this question, it would be more difficult to restore union in the nick of time, the more that action was contemplated within brief delay. Immediately after the reading of the Message, the bill for repealing the law of the 31st May was lodged by the Government. The 7th November, its discussion was begun in the *bureaux*. The 11th the reporter, Count Daru, presented his report, and on the 13th the debates were opened.

“What is the situation of France at the moment of the opening of the great debate,” said Count Daru in his report, which concluded in favour of the maintenance of the law of the 31st May.

“The public powers approach the term of their mission; their authority becomes weaker on account of it. The anarchical parties grow bolder in proportion; their doings are pointed out to you by the Message, which shows them disciplined, organized, spread over the whole of France and ready to take advantage of our errors and our divisions. The most criminal plans, and the contemplated date of their execution, are, moreover, no longer a secret from anybody.

“While factions contend, the mass of the nation remains tranquil but uneasy. Weary of revolutions, she asks of the powers that represent her peace and security. This, in fact, is her first and foremost need. She desires a pacific and lawful

solution of the difficulties by which the country is beset, and in her just apprehension of bloody conflicts she not only shows herself severe beforehand, but ready to turn against those who would assume the responsibility of giving the signal for the struggle, and thus call down upon France the rout of calamities which civil war never fails to bring in its wake."

Did not M. Daru in this last phrase involuntarily condemn the party of agitation in the Chamber? Did not the severity of his language aim straight at the quaestors, whose bill, pregnant with insults, and of which we shall have to speak shortly, was at this moment being discussed by the bureaux.\* And by saying that the nation desired "a pacific and lawful solution," did not he again severely criticize, without wishing it, the recent vote of the Assembly which had rejected the bill for the revision of the Constitution, the only combination that allowed of this pacific and lawful solution, which he said he wished with all his heart?

Count Daru added: "What is the best thing to do in this situation? Is society to divest itself of the most lawful weapons it holds, at the risk of discouraging, by so doing, its staunchest defenders? When the various parties stand ready for action, when they avow their aggressive intentions, when unmistakable symptoms, manifest signs, reveal the imminence of this aggression, and the permanent danger which the crisis of 1852 may cause to burst out—is this, indeed, the moment to deprive the cause of order of its most precious guarantee, the law of the 31st May!"

If M. Daru foresaw the perils of 1852, he measured neither their nature nor their gravity. Was not the law of the 31st May the weakest of ramparts against such menaces. Far from being a

\* The bureaux are standing committees which again select the members of the commissions charged to report upon bills presented to the French parliament.—*Trans.*

safeguard, as it had been at its origin, it on the contrary became, in the new conditions entered upon by the country, a complication, a provocation to civil war. Was it not to be apprehended, in fact, that those three millions of electors who had been disqualified, would on election day come to vindicate, arms in hand, the right that had been taken from them? The Mountain openly incited them to this insurrectionary manifestation; prudence enjoined one to close so favourable a battleground to the Revolutionary army. The law of the 31st May was powerless to avert in the least degree the storms that were gathering on the horizon. The revision of the Constitution would have dissipated them. This chance of a pacific solution having disappeared, it was evident that nothing remained but a solution in which force would assume the chief part on one side or the other.

The debate on the bill offered no salient interest. MM. de la Rochejacquelein, de Vatimesnil, de Thorigny, and Michel de Bourges, were successively heard; but the suit was pleaded before judges whose convictions were settled, whose verdict decided on. In spite of the cordial support of M. Michel de Bourges the Government failed to triumph over the coalition of the monarchical fraction; the bill was thrown out.

In ordinary times a debate on so serious a question would have lasted many days; one sitting had been sufficient to close the discussion. The hurry of the Chamber to settle this question of the law of the 31st May revealed its state of anxiety. It was burning to get at a discussion still more directly at one with the violent emotions to which every one seemed a prey. Even as the opening of the Chamber drew near one might foretell the threatening of the storm.

In fact, on the 6th November, was laid on the tribune the famous project called "the quaestors," a real implement of war invented to give battle to

the Prince-President. The primary thought, the first conception of this bill belonged to General Changarnier. The *enfants terribles* of the Chamber had unconsciously become its ardent promoters, and the majority of the leaders of the Right had rallied round it. This plea, as audacious as provoking, was conceived as follows :—

(Art. 1.) “The President of the National Assembly is entrusted with the security of the Assembly from within and from without. He exercises in the name of the Assembly the right, conferred upon the legislative power by Article 32 of the Constitution, to determine the strength of the military forces necessary to its safety, to dispose of them and to appoint the chief charged with their command. In pursuance of this provision he has the right to summon the military forces and all other authorities whose co-operation he may deem necessary. Those requisitions may be addressed directly to all the commanding officers, or functionaries, who are bound to obey them immediately, under the penalties provided by the law.

(Art. 2.) “The President may delegate this right of requisition to the quaestors or to one of them.

(Art. 3.) “The present law shall be inserted in the order of the day of the army, and posted up in all the barracks in the territory of the Republic.

(Signed) “BAZE, LE FLÔ, DE PANAT.”

A few words are necessary here to acquaint the reader with the precedents of the question revived by the bill of the quaestors.

During the early days of the Constituent Assembly of 1848, the right of the Assembly to provide for its security by itself or through the intermediary of its President had been the subject of the most lively preoccupations. A decree of the 11th May, 1848, had regulated the question ; it charged

the President of the Assembly with the arrangements for the security of the Assembly from within and without; it gave him the right to summon the necessary military force and to address his requisitions directly to the general officers or to any functionary. The Assembly had recorded this provision in the 83rd Article of its rules. Article 84 provided that the President could delegate the exercise of his right to the quaestors. This extravagant and perilous privilege of direct requisition had provoked first the opposition of General Cavaignac, notwithstanding his respect for the prerogatives of the Assembly, and afterwards that of General Changarnier himself. Those two military commanders guided by their experience and at that time by their sole preoccupation for the maintenance of discipline in the army, had protested by their acts, against a provision that might compromise the unity of command. The Assembly remained firm to its will, and in consequence of a conflict with General Changarnier had ordered the publication in every barrack of this famous edict of the 11th May.

But Articles 83 and 84 of the Constituent Assembly had not been reproduced in the new rules of the National Assembly. It was considered expedient that this exorbitant privilege should vanish with the constituent mission of the Assembly, who had created it at a period when all the powers were vested in this Assembly; hence this provision had been knowingly and prudently omitted.

Article 50 of the Constitution provided, in fact, that "*he* (the President of the Republic) *disposed of the military forces*, without the right of ever commanding them personally." Therefore to give an Assembly the right to summon a part of the army without the sanction of the President of the Republic was to impair the right he held in virtue of Article 50. To give, on the other hand, the



Chamber the right to determine the number of military forces necessary to its security and to dispose of them, but without specifying that these forces should be summoned in any other than the hierarchical ways, was to remain within the common law, to verily consecrate the omnipotence of the chief of the army, the Minister for War, to conciliate the rights of the respective powers, to respect discipline and to insure unity of command. Such had been the aim of the Constitution when in Article 32 it provided that, "It (the Assembly) determines the importance of the military forces requisite to its safety and disposes of them." The Constitution had not added the direct right of requisition, previously provided by the decree of the 11th of May, because it attributed an essentially transient value to this provision. The silence of the legislator had an indisputable significance, it was the condemnation, so far as its permanency was concerned, of the decree of the 11th May.

An important fact had confirmed this new doctrine and established the military and constitutional jurisprudence of the right of requisition by the Assembly.

In a conflict that had arisen between General Changarnier and the Chamber on this same subject, the general had ordered the copies of this decree of the 11th May, which had been posted up in the barracks, to be torn down, and in order that no doubt might remain in the minds of the officers, he had asserted the hierarchical right of the chief of the army by warning the former not to comply with any requisition, from no matter whom, unless it came through the intermediary of the Commander-in-Chief. Such was the last aspect of the question. The right provided by Article 30 of the Constitution remained unimpaired; the Chamber was empowered to determine the number of military forces necessary for its security, but it had to address itself to the Minister for War, who chose according

to his own liking the regiments charged with the security of the Assembly, and appointed the commander that suited him. This was the very obstacle at which General Changarnier hurt himself. The present law remaining in force, he could never hope to be invested with the command of the forces of the Assembly, he could not storm the Elysée at the head of a regular army. To group around him a military force whatsoever, he would have been reduced to an odious rôle, to preach insubordination to this very army in which, during an honourable career, he had energetically upheld the principles of discipline. It will be easily understood that he wished to make a supreme effort before committing himself to this painful extremity, because it was to avoid this that he had invented the proposal of the quaestors, that he had succeeded in getting it accepted by a part of the leaders of the majority, and by those who were to give the proposal their name.

We remain, therefore, strictly within the truth, we only repeat what was on every one's lips at the time, what the press proclaimed over and over again, when we affirm that the proposal of the quaestors was nothing else but a declaration of war to the Elysée, or, to speak correctly, the beginning of action. Not only was the right to dispose of the military forces of France, which the Prince held from the Constitution, encroached upon, but it was attempted to constitute a veritable army without him—an army which would have at its head the chief whom everybody named, General Changarnier, the personal enemy of Louis Napoleon. Once this army organized, the Chamber emerged from the conditions under which the attack on the Prince could only be an insurrection; it became possessed of lawful means, and could under some pretext, not difficult to find, attack the Prince arms in hand. It could dispense at last with this famous signature of President Dupin, for which General

Changarnier had waited in vain, and afford the country the terrible spectacle of civil war pursued by lawful means.

And a civil war indeed it would have been, this civil war meditated by the blind enemies of the Prince—a terrible war, in which the army, divided into two camps, would have employed all its courage and science to perpetuate the strife and to multiply the victims.

Such a proposal was not likely to remain a dead letter at the hands of those of the Prince's enemies who had conceived the idea of it. It was very evident that on the morrow of the carrying of the bill they would have taken the initiative. The most impatient clamoured for action at the very termination of the sitting, lest the Prince should have time to organize his resistance or take the offensive himself.

All these plans were known to us—in fact, they were everybody's secret. We only owed it to our special means of information to have mastered them more thoroughly. It will not be without interest to show which were those means of information and the light they threw for us on the real designs of our enemies.

At all times, the Commander-in-chief of the army of Paris had disposed of a kind of secret police, independent of that of the Prefecture. General Changarnier had his police during the period of his command, he had even extended its organization very skilfully, and when leaving his post had continued his relations with some of his agents, by the aid of whom he was able to keep a certain watch on doings it interested him to know of. Later, and at the time when the most audacious of the majority contemplated even more seriously than they had hitherto done the overthrow of the Prince-President, the general, the true chief of the conspiracy, saw his means of action considerably increased; he had organized a real police, whose

exclusive mission it was to watch the doings of the Elysée and of the Prefecture of Police.

But in this contest of espionage in which the general engaged against the Government, we had more than one advantage over him.

The staff of what is conventionally called "the secret police" is more limited than is generally supposed; it is made up almost exclusively of a small number of agents accustomed to this kind of work. Those agents naturally gravitate round the Prefecture of Police. It affords them the best chances of remuneration for their discoveries. If now and then they place their experience at the disposal of either a rival administration—which has been the case under every régime—or else of a party hostile to the Government, they take good care, however, not to fall out with the Prefecture. All other police administrations disappear, the one of the Prefecture remains. They will, therefore, never sacrifice their future to mere temporary benefits, and most often they get out of the difficulty by serving both parties at the same time.\* More curious still, they do not absolutely betray either of their employers, but give to each the information they are able to obtain. It remains with him who employs those dual-faced agents, perfectly well known at the Prefecture from long tradition, to suspiciously weigh their reports, to be on his guard against their indications. With some discernment and by carefully comparing their information with that

\* An absolute fact, to which there is scarcely an exception. The great instrument of the political police is the secret agent. There are two classes, the regularly incorporated one and the free lance. Among the latter there have been and are still some of high social position, as the following anecdote will prove. When Fouché had been appointed Minister of Police by Louis XVIII., the King asked him if during the Empire he had not had him watched. He wanted to know the spies employed. Fouché hesitated, but the King insisting, Fouché ended by answering, "Well, Sire, if you wish to know, it was the Duke de Blacas." "And how much did he get for the job?" "Two hundred thousand francs per annum, Sire," was the answer. "That's right," said Louis XVIII. with a smile, "that was the sum, he did not cheat me, then; we went halves."—*Trans.*

which has come from other sources, one may succeed easily enough in striking a balance between the truth and the wilful or unconscious lie. It is only after a series of ingeniously organized verifications that the Prefecture accepts the value of certain information, especially if the latter is intended as a basis for some measure or action.

General Changarnier lacked those means of control; he was badly served, ill-informed, and to make matters worse his principal man, in whom he placed the greatest faith, was exactly the very one among our secret agents most anxious to court favour with the Prefecture. He might betray us a little now and then to earn his salary with the General, but he would not have ventured upon any disclosure in any way injurious to us. It would have been, moreover, very difficult for him to do so, seeing that he was watched very closely himself, and he learned nothing at the Prefecture except that which we wished him to learn. Hence he became useful even in his treason. But, on the other hand, he gave us the most minute details of the doings of the General and his political friends, and it is thus that we were enabled to follow, step by step, the progress of this rash conspiracy, within the Assembly, of General Changarnier against the Chief of the State.

Information obtained from other quarters confirmed that of our agent. Hence it was plain to us that if the proposal of the quaestors was carried, its acceptance would be the signal for the attack, so long wished for and recommended by the most turbulent of the Chamber. Of course we had to take our measures in consequence.

The very day that the proposal of the quaestors was lodged with the Chamber, the Prince had sent for General de Saint-Arnaud and me to discuss the steps to be taken in view of the new eventualities that so gravely compromised the situation. Our first combinations had necessarily to be modified.



We had arranged everything on the supposition that the initiative should be taken by the chief power, we had only summarily provided for an aggression coming from the Assembly and General Changarnier; we had, therefore, to combine a new plan, and time was getting short.

Previous to the lodging with the Chamber of the Quaestors' Bill, I had felt confident of being able to assure the Prince that I should be informed at least twenty-four hours beforehand of any attempt at aggression, if they dared attempt it; consequently we should have had the necessary time to prepare for contingencies; but in the event of the proposal being carried the process of our adversaries would also be modified; we had to take counsel.

Two opinions were in presence of each other; the Prince wanted to act at the very moment of the voting of the bill, to have the troops ready, to surround the Palais-Bourbon even before the termination of the sitting, and to have the decree of the dissolution of the Assembly posted up. At the same time would appear the proclamation of the Prince to the army and his proclamation to the country, inviting the nation to dispose of her own destinies. In this combination the moral effect of a military demonstration was counted upon; a severe blow at the spirit of the representatives was aimed at; it was especially intended to show the conspiring generals that the army, under the command of its hierarchical chiefs, proclaimed its adherence to the policy of the Prince, and thus to deprive the former of all hope of seducing the troops from their duty. The representatives were to be allowed to leave unmolested; the most zealous among them would be watched without having their liberty interfered with. Perhaps those measures might have been sufficient. General de Saint-Arnaud and myself were of opinion that more energetic ones were required. We brought the

Prince over to our opinion and we decided upon the following combinations.

In the event of the quaestors' measure being voted, half of the Paris garrison would be immediately called out and the Palais-Bourbon surrounded. The representatives would be allowed to leave, but they would not be permitted to re-enter the palace; consequently they would either remain there, as voluntary prisoners unable to communicate with the outside world, or else they would quit the official building, and impair, for the purpose of resistance, the prestige always attached to the spot consecrated to the public power. At the same time the important strategical points of Paris would be occupied; the streets patrolled by cavalry, orders would be given to allow no gatherings and to disperse by force any and every crowd. At the issue of the sitting, but only when reaching their own homes, the most active of the majority would be arrested. Immediately after the voting of the bill, the decree of the dissolution of the Assembly, the proclamations of the Prince, his appeal to the nation, his appeal to the army, would be posted up.

It had been decided that we should be present, General Magnan and myself, in one of the galleries at the sitting of the Chamber. At a signal from General de Saint-Arnaud, previously agreed upon, we were to immediately leave our places and proceed to the Tuileries, to the private office of General Magnan, where the Minister for War would join us. We would await there the result of the division and act either there and then, or adjourn our action accordingly.

There still remained the serious embarrassment of old, that of constituting an eventual Ministry. This time it was more than likely that the Quaestors' Bill would not pass, consequently that there would be no necessity to act; it was arranged that in case of such necessity the Prince would simply ask M. de Thorigny to remain at his post at the

Interior. The events being the natural and unavoidable result of the struggle provoked by the Chamber, M. de Thorigny would certainly not have refused his support, and it would have been loyal and energetic. Besides, we have said it already, it was exclusively the Ministry for War and the Prefecture of Police upon which devolved the initiative of decisive measures; it was there that the action wholly lay. The rôle of the Minister of the Interior consisted simply of a passive share in the responsibility of the enterprise. To accept this responsibility it only wanted a man of heart and of courage. M. de Thorigny possessed both. One might even admit that on the battle-field thus imposed by the Chamber itself, the entire Ministry would have loyally lent itself to support the Prince in his resistance. Not a member of the Cabinet doubted the real intentions of the promoters of the quaestors' measure; the acceptance of the project was to be the signal for aggression. To forestall them by a few hours and to use the public force to foil their criminal designs was therefore nothing more than the right of legitimate defence. The offensive might have aroused the susceptibilities of certain members of the Cabinet. No one would have refused to defend himself and uphold a struggle which the Government had not provoked.

No doubt, our new arrangements, hurriedly decided upon in view of the passing of the quaestors' bill, afforded by no means all the guarantees of success of our carefully elaborated original plan. But we could not choose our own time; the Assembly fixed it for us, and notwithstanding our great dislike to engage upon the struggle under conditions that deprived us of a considerable part of our advantages, there was no way of retreat. Success, however, was not a matter of doubt with us; perhaps it would cost some terrible efforts, but we had made up our minds to win, and in similar circumstances faith and will are powerful auxi-

liaries. The only serious danger to be feared was the influence which the generals-deputies might exercise on the troops, above all General Changarnier, who might suddenly be invested with a semblance of regular authority to command the army, or at any rate, to levy a force intended to protect the Chamber. But this influence would naturally be exercised on the first regiments that came into contact with him, on those that surrounded the Palais-Bourbon. Those regiments would be selected with an eye to circumstances, and the peril might thus be minimised.

The examination of the proposed bill of the quaestors had been pushed with great activity. Both sides of the Chamber were swayed by an equally strong impatience to have done with this formidable quarrel. The excitement had reached such a degree that the Assembly was incapable of devoting the least attention to any other question submitted to it. The Reporter, M. Vitet, hurried his work, and not later than the 15th November he lodged and read his report. In listening to the honourable deputy of the Right, one instinctively felt the painful position to which he was condemned. M. Vitet was one of the declared adversaries of the Elysée; but he meditated the overthrow of Louis Napoleon, or rather, his substitution by lawful means. To have recourse to sedition was repugnant to his nature, and it was not without some genuine qualms of conscience that he became the accessory of those who wished to conquer by such means. Consequently the first words of his report were an attempt to deny all compromising feeling of community of interest with the latter, and to attenuate the real sense, the drift of the proposal.

"To determine," said M. Vitet, "whether there be any necessity to consider the measure proposed by your three quaestors, one must have examined it by itself, without any preconceived idea; one

must thoroughly understand its intention and only see in it that which is. If it aims at creating either a new right in favour of one of the great powers of the State, or merely to give a wider scope to a right already existing, you must without hesitation declare it inadmissible. But if, everything well weighed and considered, it only means to elucidate and regulate the exercise of an incontestable right, to bring to the knowledge of every one what is needful that no one should ignore, how can we nonsuit such a proposal?

"The greater the disposition shown, outside these precincts, to invest this proposal with an exorbitant character and to magnify its consequences, the more should we strive to exactly measure its true meaning, its real drift, and to form no opinion until after an examination, as intent as if the very foundation of the question had been submitted to us."

From the lips of any one but M. Vitet such language would have been taxed with duplicity, with ingenuousness perhaps. The high reputation and intelligence of the Reporter shielded him from all such insinuations. He simply underwent the dangerous effects of an illusion which too often possesses itself of the most eminent minds when blinded by passion, when carried away by party spirit. Whom could M. Vitet persuade that the proposal of the quaestors did not create a new privilege? Who, in presence of the excessive agitation the proposal had aroused, could for one instant believe in this harmlessness which the Reporter so persistently claimed for it? And who would have admitted the justification which, as will be seen, he strove to give to the intentions of the authors of the bill? who, on the contrary, would not have perceived the real drift of the proposal in the hypothetical allegations refuted by M. Vitet when he said, "For a long while already experience has shown to the honourable quaestors the neces-



sity of what they ask for, and they have easily convinced us, when they affirmed that it is not the political incidents which we are actually witnessing that have suggested the first idea of the proposal. To defer it any longer has seemed impossible to them; their responsibility would not suffer it.

"Hence," they say, "this is not a proposal suggested by actual circumstances. They as strenuously deny another imputation which has neither been spared to them; namely, that of wishing to provide the Assembly with the means to possess itself, as it were, of a portion of the army, by presently calling around it a whole body of troops not necessary to its defence."

Whatever care the Reporter had taken to lessen the importance of the question submitted to the deliberations of the Chamber, he was unable to deny the serious preoccupations it had aroused. Forgetful of the contradiction between the argument of his report and its peroration, M. Vitet said to the Assembly: "One word only on the question of urgency. We do not think that it will meet with serious objections. Those who are most distressed at the discussion of like subjects must wish that such discussions should be rare. The urgency claimed for it will allow you to settle the question in one sitting."

The Reporter concluded by asking the Assembly to vote the proposal of the quaestors. He had, however, given it a more concise form, which only corroborated its essential provisions. The proposal adopted by the majority of the commission, and submitted to the approval of the Chamber, ran as follows:—

"Shall be promulgated as henceforth pertaining to the law, and inserted in the order of the day to the army, and posted up in all its barracks, Article 6 of the Decree of the 11th May, 1848, worded as here below.

“Article one, and only one.

“The President of the National Assembly is charged with the security of the Assembly within.

“In pursuance of which he shall have the right to summon such military forces and all other authorities whose co-operation he may judge necessary.

“The requisition may be addressed directly to all officers, commanders, or functionaries, who are bound to comply with them immediately, under the penalties provided by the law.”

The reading of M. Vitet's report had been followed by a protracted agitation. Several groups demanded the adjournment of the debate; some in a spirit of conciliation, others with the hope of recruiting adherents to the proposal. The Government was anxious to make an end of this perilous agitation, and at the persistent request of the Minister for War, the discussion was fixed for the next sitting, Monday, 17th November.

The 17th November, every one was at his post. It was plain that the impending debate was one of those involving to the utmost degree the fate of the country. General Leflô, one of the authors of the measure, spoke first. In a paraphrase of M. Vitet's report, he affirmed once more the pacific intentions of the authors of the bill. No idea of aggression, no intention of diminishing the constitutional rights of the Chief of the State, had ever entered their minds. Their aim was merely to provide Article 32 of the Constitution with a commentary it lacked, and to resuscitate the Decree of the 11th May, 1848, which some evil-disposed persons pretended to have been repealed. A great number of general officers especially had spontaneously communicated to General Leflô their doubts and hesitations with regard to what they should do in the event of a requisition from the President of the Chamber without the countersign of the Commander-in-Chief of the army of Paris.

It became necessary to dispel those uncertainties. The proposal had no other aim ; it was conceived in the interests of the army and of its discipline. None but a benevolent motive should be attributed to it.

This was indeed carrying exaggeration too far, and it would have been better for the authors of the proposal to openly confess, if not their designs, at least their anxieties. If they had said to the Chamber, "We fear aggression on the part of the Prince against the Assembly, and that very shortly ; we ask you for the means to resist his enterprise and to protect the Assembly. We want for this an army to ourselves and a general to ourselves," every one would have understood the question put in that way ; but to torture truth in such a way as to present this implement of war as an olive branch, was to transgress the measure of permissible dissimulation, and to breed the suspicion of still vaster designs than those that were suspected.

It is this sentiment that possessed itself of the Left of the Assembly. It saw, no doubt, facing it, or by its side, two adversaries determined to make an end of each other. Between the Right, which wanted to bring back the Monarchy, and Louis Napoleon, whom it credited with the thought of restoring the Empire, the Left hesitated, not knowing which of those two dangers it was best to combat. Its leading members insisted upon these points : that to the majority of the Chamber, rather than to Louis Napoleon, must be attributed the reactionary laws from which the Republic was suffering ; that the Monarchy, twice laid low, by the Republicans of 1830 and 1848, would enact cruel reprisals ; that on the contrary Louis Napoleon had no past to avenge, that his tendencies were democratic, and that, after all, one might obtain some benefit from them one day. The great majority of the Left made up its mind to reject the proposal.

In fact, it was in this sense that MM. Crémieux and Michel de Bourges spoke from the tribune. It was in vain that some of the reasonable members of the Right proposed a conciliating amendment. Notwithstanding the important patronage of MM. Duke de Broglie, Admiral Cécille, Count Montalembert, Count de Flavigny, de Lagrenée, de Crouchy, Count Daru, the amendment was thrown out.

M. Thiers attached to the passing of the measure a supreme importance, and he brought to the discussion the ardour of a man who stakes his all-in-all. To his violent attacks the Minister for War opposed the clearest of arguments. He laid down general principles. He recognised the right of the Assembly to demand the troops necessary to its security, but he insisted that this requisition should come through the intermediary of the chief of the army. He reserved to the Minister for War the right to designate the commander of this contingent; he energetically vindicated the maintenance of unity in the command of the army; he would on no terms admit the possibility of hesitation in its ranks; he wanted to exclude from it all spirit of discussion or deliberation. It was the correct doctrine, the military doctrine, in all its vigour. If the division had been asked after the speech of the Minister for War, the result would not have been doubtful: the proposal would have been thrown out by an immense majority.

For a moment General Bedeau flattered himself that he might throw confusion among this majority, perhaps to rally it to his cause, by forcing the Minister for War into a declaration which he imagined would produce a decisive impression on certain minds: General de Saint-Arnaud, had he or not caused to disappear from the barracks the few copies of the Decree of the 11th May which had survived the mutilation prescribed in 1849 by General Changarnier? That was the

question to which General Bedeau required a categorical answer. It was couched in the following terms :—

“Is it true that the Decree of the 11th May, approved in its legal form by the honourable Chief of the Cabinet at that time, M. Odilon Barrot, posted up in the barracks by the then Minister for War, General Rulhière, who filled the same post only a few days ago—is it true that by order of the executive power, this Decree has been removed?” (Great commotion.)

The *Moniteur* tells us that at that moment the Ministers for War and the Interior exchanged a few words, and seemed to consult with each other. Every one felt the importance of the answer the Minister was about to give, and it was amidst great excitement of the Assembly that General de Saint-Arnaud rose to reply to the question that had been put to him. An anxious silence succeeded the tumult. The Minister for War replied in the following terms :—

“As I have had the honour of telling you, the Decree of the 11th May, 1848, having fallen into decay, never having been executed, was no longer posted up except in a small number of barracks. I did not wish to leave the troops a pretext for doubt and hesitation; I have had it removed, there where it still remained.”

In this brief explanation the Minister had laid stress on every one of his words, as if to increase their value. His attitude showed an energetic resolution; it was felt that a solution was near. Let us listen to the *Moniteur*, which alone can convey an exact idea of the spectacle afforded by this stormy end of the sitting. “At the moment that the Minister finishes his explanation an indescribable commotion reigns in the Assembly. The majority of the members have risen, a great many leave their seats, and a certain number rush to the Ministerial bench, where a lively discussion



seems to take place. MM. Baze, Druet-Desvaux, and Crémieux rush simultaneously to the tribune.

“M. Dain: ‘Lodge an act of impeachment; the Left will vote it!’

“Several members of the Left to M. Crémieux: ‘Move an impeachment, the Left will vote it!’

“M. Charras, endeavouring to make himself heard above the noise: ‘I demand the impeachment!’ (Increased noise and agitation.) M. Crémieux (turning to the Left): ‘You will vote it?’

“Several members of the Left, amongst whom we notice M. Madier de Montjau: ‘The question has not changed. We have no need to vote an appeal to the troops; they are with us.’

“The Assembly becomes altogether past control, and the ushers cannot prevail upon the members to return to their seats.”

At the moment that General de Saint-Arnaud left the Assembly, General Magnan and myself, who were in a gallery facing his bench, received the pre-arranged signal from him. We also went out, and in a few minutes found ourselves all three in the private room of General Magnan at the Tuileries. There we awaited the result of the division. If the bill was carried, we immediately put our plan decided upon into execution. If the bill was thrown out, we would confine ourselves to prevent all disturbance in the streets, where a great ferment was already noticeable.

Very shortly after our reaching the Tuileries, the result of the division was brought to us by a representative. It was as follows:—

Number of Votes	.	.	.	.	.	.	708
Majority	.	.	.	.	.	.	355
Ayes	.	.	.	.	.	.	300
Noes	.	.	.	.	.	.	408

The quaestors’ bill had been thrown out by a majority of 108.

The dignified words of the Minister for War had thrown confusion amongst the Right. Several of the members felt that the Government was ready to act, and the fear of immediate events had lost the bill a certain number of adherents on whom, at the beginning of the sitting, the authors had confidently relied. What was the upshot of this mis-carried attempt? For General Changarnier and his fellow-vanquished of the 17th November, a burning rage in their hearts, and the firm determination to take their revenge for this defeat, arms in hand; for us, the conviction that we must no longer defer the execution of our plans, unless we wished to see ourselves forestalled by our enemies.

And to those who would tell us that our apprehensions were unfounded, our alarm exaggerated, we would answer, "Take the *Moniteur* of the 17th November, consult the division list for those of the representatives who voted in favour of the quaestors' bill, who claimed for the President of the Assembly the right of direct requisition of the troops and their chiefs, and you will see among the names the most persistent adversaries this same right of direct requisitions had hitherto met with, General Cavaignac and General Changarnier—General Changarnier, who in 1849 had been the first to also tear down in the barracks this same Decree of the 11th May, of which two years after he wished to extol the merits and revive the authority.

And why did this Decree which those two generals had publicly stigmatized as an attempt to infringe discipline, hierarchy, and unity of command, why did it all at once become with them a measure of protection? Why this sudden change of front? Why this flagrant contradiction? The reply to those questions is easy enough. Those men believed to have gained their end at last. A few professions of sympathy emanating from officers devoted to their cause had raised their hopes.

They little minded, on the very day which they fondly hoped should be the one for action, to have this culpable recantation flung into their faces. They already beheld their success, and success would condone everything. If their words still belied their secret designs, their voting-paper betrayed them. In fact, could there have occurred a more pertinent revelation of their projects, their conspiracy, their eagerness for action? Who could deny that in voting the quaestors' bill, in using their influence to get it accepted by their adherents, those two generals regarded it, not as a pledge of peace and tranquillity which they held out to dazzle some of the most gullible, but as an instrument of warfare by whose aid they meant to overthrow the Prince-President?

This again is the place to say to those whom our assertions offend: refer to the overwhelming testimony of one of our most violent adversaries, of one of your most favourite leaders, read M. Odilon Barrot once more, and you will be compelled to admit that at those two dates the same thought inspired the same man. What General Changarnier had not dared to undertake in 1850 he was resolved to do on the 17th November, and this famous signature, which he had been unable to obtain from M. Dupin, President of the Assembly, he hoped this time to force from him through the intermediary of the Chamber. "The President at Vincennes"—such was in 1850 the avowed aim of the General; such was his hope in 1851.

One may safely say that the question had been submitted to the Assembly in those violent and decided terms. As much as we feel bound to praise the wisdom of those of the old Monarchical parties who refused to commit themselves by their votes to this sedition to which the zealots of their party wished to inveigle them, as much must we regret to see the latter associate themselves with a merciless war against the Chief of the State.

We thoroughly respect sincere political convictions and unwavering dynastical allegiance. We admire as right and honourable the efforts of a party to restore to the throne him who embodies its beliefs and its cause, provided, however, that they choose the right moment and the proper means.

That moment had offered itself to the three Monarchical parties after the revolution of 1848. France was plunged into anarchy. One might say that she had no Government; the field was free, the lists were open. Each party could appeal to the nation and ask her to restore its prince. If action was to be taken, assuredly 1848 was the time. It was at that date that each party should, under some form or other, have proposed the candidature of the chief of its house to the throne. Not to do so was to tacitly abdicate. To do more, to co-operate in the elevation of a pretender other than one's own was, all mental or constitutional reservations to the contrary, to openly abdicate; and that is what had been done. They had above all on the 10th December considered the salvation of the country, and the country had pointed out the man who, according to her, personified this salvation. The old parties had contributed to his elevation and to make him Chief of the State. This man, this Prince, he responded more and more each day to the confidence placed in him. He had restored order, brought back security, opened a prosperous horizon. And because his greatness increased, was this a sufficient reason to cease to support him? Because he grew stronger, was it a reason to contend against him? Because his power was about to become definitely and firmly established, was it a reason to overthrow him? Such an attitude was neither just nor patriotic. Those parties had been resigned to the 10th December; they could but continue to be resigned—logic compelled. It was vain to pretend that the expiration of the constitutional term of office in 1852 opened

a new door to the dynastic hopes. Such an assertion would have been insincere. It was more than plain to every one that in 1852 there would be only two forces confronting each other: on one side the Prince and order, on the other revolution and the *Jacquerie*. All dynastical attempts would have been crushed between these two powerful forces. The tentative moment was passed; patriotism demanded resignation. On the 10th December more had been done, perhaps, than was intended, but there was no going back, and we repeat, resignation only was opportune and patriotic.

To be just, to assign their true limits to the responsibilities of these parties at this critical period, it should be said that in general, and above all outside the Chamber, the attitude of the Monarchical parties was what it should have been, calm and moderate. And it is to render this homage that we separate them, as we have done, from this turbulent and passion-swayed group of representatives who, within the Assembly, provoked sedition and compromised both their cause and the true interests of the country.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### OUR LAST CONFERENCES.

The Bill on the responsibility of the President of the Republic.—New intrigues of the parties.—The decisions they compel on our side.—Behind the scenes.—The Press.—The secret societies.—Two speeches of Louis Napoleon.—MM. de Saint-Arnaud, Magnan, de Persigny, and de Morny.—M. de Morny designated as Minister of the Interior.—Our conference at the Elysée on the 1st December.

ON the evening itself of the 17th November we were sent for from the Elysée. General de Saint-Arnaud and I rapidly discussed with the Prince what was to be done. During the night we had only to watch the doings of our adversaries. The



next morning we were to have another conference to decide upon the steps dictated by circumstances.

Before going to the Elysée on the 18th November, I had already received a report informing me of the frame of mind of the vanquished of the previous day. If some had yielded to the dejection so frequently bred from defeat, the most violent had, on the contrary, shown an increase of zeal. Scarcely had one of their projects been condemned by the Chamber than they already meditated a new surprise, to betray it into some measure, some resolution, some act, that might serve as a basis of their schemes.

By a singular coincidence, the very day that the quaestors' proposal had been discussed by the Assembly, a bill, framed by the Council of State with reference to the responsibility of the President of the Republic, had been laid on the table of the Assembly. In this bill, or rather by its side, the opportunity, which had just been allowed to escape, presented itself anew. A commission was appointed without delay. Care had been taken to compose it with the declared adversaries of the Prince. The possible revenge of the 17th November was already dawning on the horizon.\* This time it was hoped to attract at least a part of the members of the Left. No sacrifice would be spared to ensure this conquest. Hence parliamentary intrigue and conspiracy resumed their course side by side and more actively than ever.

All those manœuvres were revealed to us, and it became the more necessary to follow their progress that they were not the only perils that confronted us.

\* The committee entrusted with the examination of the bill on the responsibility of the depositaries of public authority had been appointed the 22nd November, 1851. It was composed as follows:—1st Bureau, M. Michel (de Bourges); 2nd, Duprat (Pascal); 3rd, Creton; 4th, Bechard; 5th, Crémieux; 6th, Berryer; 7th, Janvier; 8th, Monet; 9th, Arago (Emanuel); 10th, Dufaure; 11th, Cambarel de Leyval; 12th, Jules de Lasteyrie; 13th, Dufraisse; 14th, de Laboulie; 15th, Pradié.

If the Monarchists, or rather the bell-wethers of the Right, contemplated possessing themselves of the public power, the demagogues, to whom those plans were by no means a mystery, judged, and rightly, that the attempt was impossible without a violent collision. Once the struggle entered upon, the first shots fired, the army divided into two camps perhaps, anything and everything might result from such a conflagration. And the secret societies, gathering all their strength at that very moment, might not this terrific blaze afford the Revolution another day of triumph?

For the demagogues no more propitious opportunity to spring to arms could surely present itself than an insurrection began by the Monarchists. Hence the most circumspect of the Mountain showed themselves very far-seeing indeed when they tried to calm the impatience of their friends, notably of the refugees in London, who wished to profit by the agitation of the latter sittings of the Assembly to attempt a general movement. Among the refugees in London a great number were living in the greatest misery; the relief that came from France grew smaller each day, the resources of the party being devoted in preference to the purchase of arms and ammunition, and the necessitous exiles angrily rejected the recommendations to be patient. Their exasperation had reached such a point that they announced to those whom they called "the temporizers of the party," their determination to act, and if needs be, to organise an armed uprising without their co-operation.

We had in London, in the heart of the revolutionary French colony itself, a gang of secret police who kept us informed of the doings and sayings of the conspirators. Their departure was notified to us beforehand, and we could therefore have them either arrested on their arrival or rigorously watched, which often enabled us to discover those of their accomplices previously unknown to us. The Lon-

don and provincial conspirators thus aiding each other to prepare for an uprising, the most impatient of the Right in the Assembly meditating aggression on their side, could we remain much longer under the constant apprehension of their menaces? I, for my part, did not think so, and in our meeting of the 18th November I asked for the immediate execution of our plans originally decided upon. General de Saint-Arnaud showed himself even more impatient to have done with it, and the date of Thursday, the 20th November, which I suggested, was eagerly accepted by him. The Prince, without telling us the motive of his preference, inclined to a postponement of a few days. He spoke of the week following, and at his desire the day decided on was Tuesday, the 25th November.

In the midst of our preparations for that day we were summoned on the Saturday morning to the Elysée. As each of us saw the Prince separately every day, this collective summons caused us to apprehend a further modification of his plans for the day of action. In fact he asked for a fresh adjournment, and proposed Tuesday, the 2nd December. Tuesday, the 2nd December, was therefore fixed upon. Finally, and to conclude this detail, we must state that on Friday, the 28th November, the Prince proposed once more to alter the day for one in the next week but one. We could not consent to these repeated adjournments. Everything was ready; the necessity for action became each day more urgent. An unforeseen incident might become the pretext for a riot; the secret societies were sitting in permanence, and began to distribute their arms and ammunition; General Changarnier was most zealously urged to take the offensive by the forlorn hope of the Chamber. He had mentioned the 4th December as the possible date for his doing so. It became imperative not to let our enemies forestall us and to preserve the advantages of the initiative. We

insisted, therefore, that nothing should be changed in our last arrangements, and finally the Prince gave in. The 2nd December remained the date irrevocably fixed upon.

We have already informed the reader of what was going on in the Chamber, what was being meditated in the secret conferences of all shades. We have disclosed our preparations at the Elysée. We will complete those points by giving the impression produced on public opinion by what was perceptible to it in those exciting periods of this grand drama.

The *Coup d'État* and the insurrection had so long been talked of, that scepticism had succeeded to fear with some, to hope with others. Nevertheless, cynical and indifferent as people had become about these periodical rumours, they seemed this time to attach more weight to them than usual. There was a general belief that the end was nigh. In the drawing-rooms, in the clubs, in every public spot, there was no other topic of conversation. "Who'll begin, Louis Napoleon or Changarnier?" that was the question asked everywhere.

Behind the parliamentary scenes excitement had reached its highest pitch. Every one was concocting something. The most inventive gave themselves full play; above all, those who, not belonging to any extreme shade, would not abandon the hope of some adjustment. Every day saw the birth of a new system, and there were not wanting busy-bodies to bring those tardy lucubrations to the Elysée. But an understanding had become impossible, a parliamentary solution a mirage. The throwing out of the bill for the revision of the Constitution had destroyed the last chance. Each party felt conscious of it, each party made ready for the strife, and to condemn one's self to wait at such a moment was to court defeat without having contended.

The press naturally associated itself with those movements—incited them, as it were. Each morn-

ing those organs that served their parties as banners egged them on to battle; their articles smelt of powder. Among those inciting publications, public opinion was particularly struck by a leader in the *Constitutionnel* of the 24th November.

The importance of the article itself was increased by the circumstance of M. de Cassagnac being justly known to take his inspirations from the Elysée. The Prince had often charged him with preparing public opinion in favour of his plans. The article of the eminent publicist was considered a preface to the *Coup d'État*. Its title, "The Two Dictatorships," resumed in itself the great pending question.

"Never," said M. de Cassagnac, "have there been hatched as many conspiracies, as many surprises prepared, as at this moment, in the higher circles of society and among the leaders of the old parties. The ambitious and the factious object to order being restored, to work being assured, to business reviving, if society, in a sound and safe condition, is to escape their plans of domination and of being worked upon at a profit. Sooner would they see the streets of Paris up, every foreigner leave it in a hurry, every shop closed, hear the mob sing the *Ça ira!*\* the population frightened out of their wits by the stump orators of the clubs, sooner . . . sooner would they resign themselves to anything, short of seeing their importance impaired.

"We have already escaped by a miracle more than one of those forcing-house revolutions, concocted in two or three political drawing-rooms, meditated in the editorial room of some newspaper, arranged in the lobbies of Parliament; but miracles are rare, and it would be rash to count upon them.

\* A revolutionary song which in 1789 a street-singer named Ladre improvised on the music of "Le Carillon National," by Bécourt.—*Trans.*



“France may wake up to-morrow, the next or any other day, to the terrific noise of a universal crash ; if she perish beneath the ruins, she should at least know who prepared them, whence they come. We shall advance nothing but what is said openly in the political world, and assuredly we are not bound to more discretion than the conspirators themselves.

“On Monday last, a week to-day, we were within a hair’s breadth of civil war. The parties who dispute with each other the supreme power had flung a proposal into the Assembly, aiming less at giving an army to the Legislative powers than to provoke indecision and disorder among the troops, and to provide the opportunity and the means to a daring general to entice a regiment or two from their duty. If the Assembly had been weak enough to consider for a moment the proposal submitted to it, an impeachment would have been wrung from it. The conspirators had prepared their blow. Armed with a vote more or less conclusive, more or less explicit, they would have arrested the Ministers there and then, and if success had crowned this first step, endeavoured to carry off the President.

“But as may be supposed, the President of the Republic and his friends do object somewhat to being improved off the face of the Republic in so peremptory a fashion. Hence the assailants would have been welcomed with rifle-shot or something better still ; and there and then the battle in the streets would have begun. The contingency remained possible up till half-past seven ; the vote of the Assembly knocked it on the head. Assuredly nothing can be more senseless, more criminal, than such a design. It is a downright fact, nevertheless, and there is not a living soul in the political world who ignores its details.

“This flagrant conspiracy, allowing the President of the Republic no respite, has for its authors men

in Parliament, the avowed chiefs of the Legitimist and Orleanist parties, deeply divided among each other, but united in a common bond of hatred against the people's elect of the 10th December. This conspiracy has been organized for the last eighteen months; and at the time when a notable general occupied the Tuileries, its drawing-rooms were the meeting place of a number of eminent political personages, who debated the arrest of Louis Napoleon and his impounding at Vincennes. There can be no doubt upon the subject. A former Prime Minister of Louis Philippe, who was present at those meetings, warned the President of the Republic of what was being plotted against him. The conspirators' aim is to create a dictatorship, to govern with the support and under the control of the actual Assembly, which would be indefinitely continued under its new appellation of the Convention. The dictator is pointed out by everybody: it is General Changarnier." M. de Cassagnac wound up his article with this warning, significant when emanating from his pen: "The public power entrusted with and responsible for the maintenance of order is, as may easily be supposed, informed of all their designs and intrigues; and though they do not feel it, they have each the firm and resolute hand of the law suspended at an inch from their coat-collar."

If ever an article caused a profound sensation, it was assuredly that of M. de Cassagnac.\* He had displayed all his talent, all his "go." He had treated the question as a politician; and one beheld already the dauntless wrestler who later on, in the tribune of the Chamber, would prove himself the eloquent champion of Conservative principles.

If the journals devoted to the Elysée held this language, made themselves the echoes of the law-abiding, and asked to be delivered from those inces-

\* Granier de Cassagnac, father of the present duelling journalist.—*Trans.*

sant menaces against the government of Louis Napoleon, the demagogical organs were not behind. They preached civil war, demanded an appeal to arms within brief delay, and thus created a powerful excitement.

To those various causes for agitation was added one other, which to the capital itself became a serious matter. Paris had to elect a representative to the new Assembly; the election was fixed for the 30th November. The public meetings sanctioned during electoral periods resounded each day with the most subversive language. I had been compelled to have several of those improvised clubs closed, notably the one held at the *Barrière de Fontainebleau*; and I had handed those street-corner orators who openly preached the most incendiary doctrines over to the authorities. I had also prohibited another meeting which was held at the *Barrière des Martyrs*, and to which all the demagogues of the adjacent faubourgs flocked in crowds. In spite of this interdict a meeting had been held in the same building; more than 1,500 Socialists took part in it. I had been obliged to have recourse to force to put an end to the scandalous proceedings of which this meeting was the scene. My agents had stoutly acquitted themselves, and notwithstanding the resistance of the principal leaders, the law had prevailed. But each day witnessed similar attempts at revolt against the authorities, and each day witnessed, also, new arrests of those who distributed arms and by other means zealously prepared the projected uprising.

As may be seen, agitation prevailed everywhere: among the press, among the people, among the secret societies. It was undoubtedly most violent in the very heart of the Assembly itself.

If from the 31st October, 1849, to this month of November, 1851, the contest, notwithstanding some outbursts, had been slow between Louis Napoleon and Parliament, it has been seen by now that this

contest suddenly assumed an exceedingly intense character. Time was getting short; the fatal term of 1852 was at hand, and no camp would willingly face its hazards. If the parties prepared themselves at last for the supreme effort whence might spring their triumph, Louis Napoleon on his side wished to save the country, and the hour had come to devote himself to this grand task.

We have mentioned the supreme and just importance attached by the Prince to absolute secrecy with regard to his real designs, to his plan of action, to its date of execution; but the silence which he demanded from others and imposed upon himself also was not incompatible with random allusions to what he might do one day. Those oft-repeated allusions had on the contrary thrown opinion out of its reckoning. On the very eve of the decisive moment, he resumed once more his favourite method of reassuring the country on her fate, of reasserting, as he had already done at Dijon, his confidence in the future.

To the officers of the regiments newly arrived in Paris the Prince said:

“In receiving the officers of the various regiments of the army who succeed each other as the Paris garrison, I congratulate myself to see them animated by the military spirit which was our glory once, and which to-day provides our security. Your duties, you have ever discharged them with honour, whether on African ground or French soil; and you have always, amidst the most difficult trials, preserved discipline intact. I trust that those trials will not recur, but if grave circumstances brought them back once more and compelled me to appeal to your devotion, it would not fail me, I am sure, because you know I would not ask you to do aught that is incompatible with my rights ‘granted to me by the Constitution,’\* with

\* Those six words were added to the official reports. Louis Napoleon did not speak them.—*Trans.*

the honour of a soldier, with the welfare of the country; because I have placed at your head men who possess all my confidence and deserve yours; because if ever the hour of danger struck I should not do as did the Governments that preceded me, and say to you, 'Go; I follow you,' but 'I go; follow me.'"

Such language could not fail to inspire confidence to the army, to reassure the well-disposed, and, above all, to intimidate the enemies of Louis Napoleon rather than warn them.

To the French exhibitors of the London Universal Exhibition, the Prince said on the 25th November:

"In presence, then, of those unexpected results, I can but repeat: How great this France could be if she were allowed to mind her genuine interests, to reform her institutions, instead of being incessantly disturbed, on one side by demagogical ideas, on the other by Monarchical hallucinations.

"Do these demagogical ideas proclaim a truth? Certainly not; they spread everywhere the error and the lie. Anxiety precedes them, disappointment follows, and the resources employed to repress them are so many losses to the most urgent improvements, to the relief of misery.

"As for the Monarchical hallucinations, without exposing the country to similar dangers, they nevertheless and equally stop all progress, all serious labour.

"One fights instead of marching. Men heretofore ardent promoters of the prerogatives of royal authority, convert themselves into *conventionnels* in order to disarm the power born from popular suffrage. We see those who have suffered most from, most loudly wailed at, revolutions, provoke a new one; and this with the sole aim of eluding the national will, of preventing the movement that transforms societies from pursuing its peaceable



current. Those efforts are in vain. *Everything that becomes a necessity of the times must be accomplished.*"

The transparency of those last words was striking enough, and talking of them with us in the evening at the Elysée, the Prince asked himself if he had not said too much. If the excitement to which Paris was already a prey could have increased, assuredly those words would have done it.

The political fever and the revolutionary agitation had become so intense that for a moment we thought to have delayed our plans too long by fixing their execution at the 2nd December. With great trouble I had been able to convey through the intermediary of General Changarnier's confidential agent a few words that might allay the violent alarms of himself and his small conclave, but they remained on the alert and actively pursued their preparations for the struggle. Amidst painful anxiety we had reached the 30th November, the day on which a representative was to be elected in Paris. The election went off without any disturbance.\* Two days only separated us from the 2nd December. The moment had come again to treat the Ministerial question once more. In those last moments there was less danger in bringing it forward than at the period when we had first occupied ourselves with it. The resistance of the Prince was the same. He had come in very close contact, during the recent crisis, with the men whom he had naturally designated. Nearly all counselled pacific and illusionary solutions, which denoted plainly enough that they feared an appeal to force, and that they declined beforehand to associate themselves with any act inaugurated in that way. Given that there was no properly constituted Ministry at the early hours of the 2nd

\* M. Devinck, a member of the Paris Municipal Council, and Conservative candidate, had been elected by 52,369 votes. The Opposition had abstained.

December, it appeared none the less necessary that there should be a Minister of the Interior to serve as intermediary between the Prince and the Prefects, and to transmit the news from Paris to the provinces. After much hesitation the Prince had definitely fixed upon M. de Morny. What had been the nature of this gentleman's last and successful exhibition of skill and persistence I never knew. The Minister for War and myself were told both together that M. de Morny would be our third colleague on this eventful day, and that the Prince had but a few moments before informed him of this decision.

The trio for action was therefore definitely fixed upon under the supreme direction of their valiant master. MM. de Saint-Arnaud at the War Office, de Morny at the Interior, de Maupas at the Prefecture of Police had to attack on the 2nd December the solution of this great social problem, proposed by the year 1852. A fateful date, a menace prospectively but irretrievably fixed, which would paralyze trade and industry, ruin credit, and frighten Europe, which was watching our convulsions; a date of grief and blood if we had let the eleventh hour of the presidential power go by, and allowed the demagogic hordes to overwhelm us; a date of deliverance if we succeeded in emerging triumphantly from this great enterprise which the heart of the Prince had boldly conceived.

We have often had to speak already of those men, who by their counsel or by their action, became the auxiliaries of the Prince on the 2nd December, MM. de Saint-Arnaud, de Morny, de Persigny, and Magnan. A few words about each will not be without interest.

General de Saint-Arnaud was one of those men whose name will live in history. Africa had been the promised land to him. He had found in it a hundred occasions for the display of his bravery and military aptitude. His preferment had been

rapid and deserved. Marshal Bugeaud, whose judgment in those matters was tantamount to law, had predicted the highest destinies for General de Saint-Arnaud.

After a brilliant expedition in Kabylia, he had been called to an important command in the army of Paris, that of the second division, occupying the whole of the left bank of the Seine. The day that this post was intrusted to him, he was regarded as the Minister for War of the near future, the Minister of the Solution, the Minister of the *Coup d'État*.

To the political world and to Paris, General de Saint-Arnaud was a new figure. People studied him with interest. He did not attempt to elude this kind of inquisition; he remained the natural, candid, and jovial fellow nature had made him. People were not long in finding out the man's worth. He quickly won a good deal of sympathy.

The general had every quality to please. His winning features reflected the subtlety of mind; the vigorous intellect was shown in the slightest conversation; everything in him bespoke superiority. What struck one first of all was his confident bearing. There stood the man sure of himself and accustomed to success. In important discussions General de Saint-Arnaud always saw the lofty side of things. His was a soul full of grandeur; he has shown it in the events that rendered his name illustrious. Nobody possessed in a higher degree the qualities necessary to the task he had to accomplish. Brave, resolute, he saw the hour of peril approach without the least emotion. He had a marvellous faculty of attracting sympathy; the wish to please and to second him was a kind of stimulant to his subordinates. In a very short time he had the army of Paris in his hands, as it were. It had confidence in and was ready to follow him everywhere. He might boldly lead it to action.

General Magnan was worthy to figure by the

side of General de Saint-Arnaud. One must have seen and known General Magnan to properly estimate this finely constituted nature. His sympathetic address inspired confidence. His brief language breathed candour. Under the mask of great *bonhomie*, which rendered him accessible to everybody, one felt the power to command. He did not frighten one, but he commanded respect. Good, affectionate, and tender with his own, he was worshipped by the companions of his daily life; he was sincerely beloved by all who had intimate relations with him.

As a soldier, General Magnan was very favourably noticed by his fellow-officers. They proclaimed him one of the best tacticians in the army. He had a great faculty for organization; he was proficient in the science of war, and if circumstances had placed him in presence of important problems, he would have risen to their level. He had all the qualities required for the chief command—science, a quick eye, equally quick decision, firmness, courage, and even the soldier-like beauty that never fails to enhance the prestige of moral qualities.

Upon these two illustrious soldiers devolved the military part of the enterprise; but side by side with the active share was the passive one, counsel. Amongst the men who had zealously pushed the Prince to a decisive solution like the one which was preparing, we must place M. de Persigny foremost.

The judgments on M. de Persigny are generally distinguished by an excess of praise or an excess of severity. At times he is represented as the beneficent prompting angel of the Prince in the happy days of the Empire; at others people persist in seeing nothing in him but a political embryo, the man of adventure and shady combinations.

M. de Persigny's character was decidedly out of the common, but it offered the strangest contradictions. Grand inspiration, enlightened ideas,

revealed themselves in him side by side with the most astonishing visionary theories. Thus M. de Persigny often became a precious counsellor to hear, but scarcely less dangerous to listen to. One might extract the elements of useful resolutions from the numberless combinations every political incident suggested to him, but it was prudent not to accept his counsel save under the reservation of a scrupulous examination and a rigorous control.

Indifferent to practice—to which, in fact, he remained a stranger all his life—M. de Persigny delighted in the exposition of theories of all kinds, and went out of his way, as it were, in search of the most abstract subjects.

His predilections had always leaned to politics. He was for ever studying the great questions of State, and for every possible foreseen and unforeseen event he had found, in his meditations, a solution which he loved to expound to some faithful admirers. At such moments he expressed himself with great ardour, with the eloquence of a passionate and sincere believer, which in fact he remained, even in his errors.

In grave conjunctures he was a man of great resources, if it so happened that the circumstance was one of those upon which he had a theory ready. To invite him to consider an unforeseen fact was to expose one's self to a hazardous appreciation of the same. M. de Persigny was a man one had to lay in wait for. One caught him at times, but it would not do to interrogate him. It is not saying too much to assert that now and then he had genuine flashes of political genius. He made both the Prince and the country profit by them, and in those may be found the causes of his elevation; but as everything is contrast in this strange nature, side by side with the services he was able to render are lamentable errors, from which the Prince and the country suffered equally.



The expression of his features was sad. He voluntarily isolated himself, even amidst a crowd, and generally paid no attention to any conversation he had not provoked himself. His temper was very changeable, and often caused him much unpleasantness. The slightest disappointment, the smallest hurt to his feelings, provoked violent fits of passion which he was unable to control, and which he was the first to regret when he had regained his composure, for he was essentially good-natured, kind, and generous, and most anxious to make up for any slight he caused. M. de Persigny had been brought up in the school of adversity. He had known the sorrows of exile and captivity. He had nobly borne these trials for the sake of his Prince, his ideas, and his country. He had faith in the Empire. When the Empire seemed nothing but a chimerical vision, he beheld it on the horizon as the inevitable consequence of the commotions France was undergoing. Bold to the verge of rashness, he had shown that he was prepared to sacrifice his life to the triumph of his cause.

One word paints the man. M. de Persigny was an apostle.

M. de Morny has been judged in various ways : favourably by those whose opinions could only be based upon certain appearances ; the reverse by those who came into very close contact with him, and who could preserve their independent judgment with regard to him.

Brought up by others than his parents, his infancy had lacked those precious family examples, those precepts which from the tenderest age follow us, without our being aware, throughout the course of our existence, stand by our side amidst the most violent tempests, and support us in our final hours by aiding us to forge a link between the entrance to and the exit from life.

Left to direct his own studies, to choose his own

career, he fell a prey to the hesitations natural to youth. He tried everything—literature, art, science, political economy, and succeeded in preserving a superficial tinge of each of those attempts.

On reaching manhood he abandoned his abstract studies. From his very childhood, tales with reference to his birth had been told to him, well calculated to set a boy dreaming. The dreams had left an inordinate ambition, a love of notice, a determination to rise at any cost. He thought of seeking fame in the career of arms, and showed himself a brilliant officer in Africa; but save to transcendent merit, the path to glory is a long one in the soldier's profession. Young de Morny would not submit to these delays, and claimed from industry the notoriety to which fortune is allowed to pretend. There he yielded to an erroneous impression. Industry does not improvise wealth. It holds it out as a reward for prolonged efforts and wise and patient combinations. Speculation only can procure riches in one day, on the penalty, however, of making her favourite rue her largess next morning by ruin or dishonour.

M. de Morny would see nothing before him but the most smiling hopes. He abandoned industry for speculation and asked the Stock Exchange to provide for his future. Paris became his centre of operations, and the representation of the country, which a lucky chance had placed in his path, allowed him to utilize the political pedestal for his enterprises. He took rapidly and completely to every modern custom. His time was divided between the dissipations of the fashionable world and the less distinguished society of those speculation-mongers from whom he asked the fortune he endeavoured to build up. With those sort of people he succeeded in ridding himself of the pompousness, scarcely to be explained, which he fancied his birth imposed. He affected a kind of

jovial good-fellowship and gained considerably by showing himself in that character.

The Count de Flahaut entertained the most tender affection for M. de Morny. He had watched over his political career and given him all the benefits of his powerful protection.\* It was by his advice that M. de Morny, notwithstanding the favour he had enjoyed with the Orleans Princes, endeavoured to win the same from Louis Napoleon. After having been an ardent Orleanist under the Government of July, M. de Morny became a Bonapartist at the first glimmerings of the exalted fate in store for the Prince. He became one of his most assiduous courtiers, and we have already seen the efforts by which he succeeded in getting himself appointed as his minister. In this high station he displayed great courage, sound sense and tact, but for lack of political experience and knowledge he remained as a statesman below what he might have been if more serious antecedents had prepared him for the part circumstances entrusted him with. The Prince judged him in that way, and what is more, all that has been said to the contrary notwithstanding, did not like him, which explains the little store he often set by his advice.

M. de Morny knew that the principal condition of importance was at this period, as under all personal governments, the favour of the Chief of the State. Consequently he displayed all his ingenuity in making people believe that he enjoyed this

\* Count de Flahaut de la Billarderie was at one time as well known in English as in French society. After Waterloo he spent more than ten years in England, where he married the daughter of Admiral Keith. In 1842 he returned to London as Ambassador of Louis Philippe to the Court of St. James, until 1846 or '47. The Count de Morny was commonly supposed to be his illegitimate son by Queen Hortense, the mother of Napoleon III. M. de Maupas' appreciation of M. de Morny's character is just perhaps, but one-sided undoubtedly. Count de Morny had many good traits, one of them his exceeding great charity. It would require a more extended biographical notice than I am justified in giving to show the real M. de Morny.—*Trans.*

consideration, and he succeeded. Hence he owed his importance to his skill rather than to his merit.

A commonly received opinion is that M. de Morny exercised a salutary influence on the destinies of the Empire. Such is not our opinion. If he showed himself full of courage on the 2nd December, others would have borne equally well, had the post been confided to them, this enviable burden. If he succeeded in gaining a real influence over the legislative body, his courtesy and tact were no doubt the principal causes; but at the time when he presided over this Assembly, it sufficed to be the delegate of the Chief of the State to wield an almost irresistible sway. At any rate, he made the Prince cruelly expiate the services he may have rendered him, by standing forth, in the interest of his own popularity, as the promoter of many of those pernicious reforms to which France owes her misfortunes; in fact, in that fatal campaign that led to the ill-regulated liberty of the press and to the law on public meetings, M. Emile Olivier's original and principal accomplice was M. de Morny.

M. de Morny caused the Empire another and grave moral prejudice. In this foundering of all principles which we witness to-day there are still some that survive. If they are not always applied very vigorously to one's self, one wishes at least to see them applied by others. It is thus that France expects the men that govern her to abstain personally from and to have no interest in any industrial enterprise or speculation. The hazardous speculations of M. de Morny not only brought discredit upon the office he held, but the noise they provoked was such that public opinion took umbrage at it. It imagined to have found a kind of disclosing symptom in these traffickings. The enemies of the Government did not fail to discount this error, and there, where people should have

seen nothing but an individual dereliction, they strove to prove a moral decadence in the higher spheres of the supreme power.

To be exact one might say of M. de Morny: he was a man of exceeding elegance and rare tact; he was ever brave, capable and powerful sometimes; he was adventurous and compromising in public affairs; but his name and his acts caused great noise. This was his ambition; he had the satisfaction of attaining it.

After this there is no need to explain the difficulties the name of M. de Morny provoked in the ministerial preliminaries, but the hour for a consideration of persons was gone by. During the day of the 1st December M. de Morny was present for the first time at one of our meetings; the Prince, General de Saint-Arnaud, and I initiated him to the details so long decided upon; after which we settled a question which to me was of supreme importance.

The Prefect of Police has at all times occupied *de facto* a rank almost equal to that of the ministers among the superior members of the Government. But though the Executive under the monarchy as well as since has practically and within certain limits held him independent of the Minister of the Interior, by admitting him daily to the direct transaction of business with the Chief of the State without the intermediary of this Minister, the latter remained his hierarchical chief nevertheless, and could give him his orders, thereby paralyzing his will and his initiative at a given moment. In view of the grave circumstances upon which we were entering a situation such as that was conducive to some real danger. A large part of the responsibility would weigh directly upon me; I was bound to claim my absolute independence, my full freedom of action. The Prince understood it thus, and M. de Morny made no objection to absolve me from his authority. Besides, he was



only to enter upon his functions on the 2nd December at a quarter-past six in the morning; at that hour the *Coup d'État* would be an accomplished fact, if success was to crown our hopes.

I had equally to take measures to emancipate myself from the supremacy of the military power. We were to act under the conditions of a state of siege. And the state of siege immediately deprives the civil authorities of their most notable attributes, to confide them for the time being to the military authorities. In order to give me back such powers as the law would take from me, an order of the Minister for War, by which he renounced the attributes which the proclamation of the state of siege conferred upon him to restitute them to me, seemed to us to meet the case. General de Saint-Arnaud understood that nothing was to bar my progress; he accepted and signed an act of delegation which established the exact nature of our reciprocal relations.

The act read as follows :—

“The Minister for War,

“Considering the decree proclaiming the state of siege within the territory of the first military division,

“Decrees :

“We delegate to the Prefect of Police all those of his powers whereof the state of siege deprived him.

“The Minister for War,

“A. DE SAINT-ARNAUD.

“PARIS, the 2nd December, 1851.”

After having settled some more details we appointed to meet finally after the reception at ten in the evening at the Elysée.\* We were to leave the drawing-rooms separately and repair to the Prince's private room for our last conference. The hour for the grand solution was nigh.

\* The Prince was “at home” on Mondays, consequently Monday, 1st December, was a reception day.

## CHAPTER XV.

## THE NIGHT BETWEEN THE 1ST AND 2ND DECEMBER.

The soirée of the 1st December at the Elysée.—Our last conference in the Prince's private room.—The "Mémoires" of M. Claude; their impostures and their calumnies.—The part of each in the night of the 1st and 2nd December.—Colonel de Bévillé at the national printing works.—My private room from three till seven in the morning.—My instructions to the commissaries of police.—Precautions taken to avert suspicion.—The Republican Guard.—The direction of Mazas.—The part of the secret police.—The lower strata of demagoguery.—Our latest informations about the generals and representatives who were to be arrested.—The night reports of the state of Paris.—Had we the law and right on our side?

THE evening of the 1st December offered no incident worthy of record. The conversation turned upon the political incidents of the last few days. Just to keep their tongues in practice, the guests spoke of the *Coup d'État* as they had spoken of it for the last twelvemonth, and above all within the last few weeks. The Prince bore his share of the conversation with his ordinary composure; nothing betrayed the slightest preoccupation in him. Shortly after ten General de Saint-Arnaud and I left the reception rooms by the principal door so as to evoke no suspicion, and made our way by the courtyard to the private room of the Prince, whither he had preceded us in company with M. de Morny. At ten minutes past ten we were all assembled. M. de Persigny had been sent for by the Prince to join us. We have already said it, the President felt deeply grieved to see his faithful companion of the days of peril and exile debarred from an active part in the *Coup d'État*. He regretted to let lie fallow at such a moment this chivalric devotion, this heart eager to share the strife. By admitting him in this way to our last conference

he wished to give him a proof of his confidence and his affection.

It was in fact to discharge a debt of the heart to thus associate M. de Persigny with the accomplishment of the 2nd December. No one more than he had long ago pushed the Prince to this needful solution. They had at various times examined together the different means to execute this grand project; and at this previous period, when unexpected hesitations and defections had almost wrecked the resolve for a *Coup d'État*, it was M. de Persigny who, after having contributed largely to the preparing of the elements, was the last to abandon a hope so dear to his heart.\*

Besides, M. de Persigny brought the complementary support of an experience gained from long meditation on a favoured subject.

Many and many a fable has been built on this last interview. Many and many a pompous sentence has been cited, such as men never indulge except when excitement colours and dramatizes the most simple thoughts and actions. This final meeting partook of none of the exceptional character people wished to give to it. A spectator ignorant of what was really taking place would have supposed that the most commonplace interests or current affairs were being discussed, so complete was the calm in the Prince's room.

Each of us, the President first, read once more the proclamations which a few hours later were to cover the walls of the capital and tell France of her new destinies. General de Saint-Arnaud and I enumerated once more the whole of the measures we had prepared; we both renewed our expressions of confidence in our orders being executed, and separated. The Prince shook hands with us

\* In the preparation for the *Coup d'État* which was to be made on the 17th December, and of which we have already said a few words, the Prince had for auxiliaries M. de Persigny and Colonel Fleury, both belonging to his military household, and his most intimate confidants.

as he would have done on the eve of any ordinary day, calm and confident as are those lofty dispositions who need make no efforts to rise to critical situations, and who find themselves lifted to their level by remaining within the simplicity of their natures, within the genuine tranquillity of their characters.

Let us add that before separating the Prince insisted upon sharing with General de Saint-Arnaud the modest sum he had in his cash box. This cash box was none other than the right-hand drawer of his writing table. The Prince lifted a tray which contained his petty cash, then taking a small box that was at the bottom of the receptacle: "This is all my wealth," he said gaily, "take half of it, General; you may want it to-morrow to bestow some gratifications." The box contained 40,000 francs in bank notes, and twenty *rouleaux* of gold of 1,000 francs each; the General took ten of the latter, and the Prince kept the remainder of this modest treasure.

This meeting of the 1st December at the Elysée is one of those circumstances that have most powerfully inspired the inventive and mendacious skill of a pretended M. Claude, one of the pamphleteers to whom we have alluded in our preface. However painful it may be to have to pick up the impostures of such people, we felt bound in the interests of truth to overcome our dislikes and to make the sacrifice.

This book was written when appeared the "Mémoires of M. Claude," one of those unwholesome publications invented nowadays by the spirit of speculation; one of those tales of doubtful alloy which aim before everything at whetting public curiosity by the scandal they promise in order to reap the reward in ready cash.\* This

\* I beg leave to refer the reader to one or two articles on the subject of "Les Mémoires de M. Claude" which appeared in the *Saturday Review* of 1882. The writer understood his subject thoroughly, and the

libel, from the point of view of notoriety, has a perfidious advantage over any and all of the others, viz. the name of its author—if it be that M. Claude is the author, a fact which has absolutely been contested. But be the “Mémoires of M. Claude” apocryphal or not, the post occupied by this man in the past may contribute to the belief in the accuracy of what he writes. It is only in consideration of this that we will grant the “Mémoires of M. Claude” the honours of some categorical denial in this place.

M. Claude furnishes such minute details of what passed at the Elysée in our final interview on the evening of the 1st December that in reading them one might be led to believe that he himself was present in the Prince's room. Only every one of those details is an error or a calumny. Let us take them one by one.

We will take the errors first.

Vol. i. p. 185. “At that moment,” says M. Claude, “my prefect was waiting in the private room of the Prince for the reception to terminate, so that he might take his orders. . . .”

An incorrect assertion. The Prince had left the reception rooms at ten o'clock with M. de Morny, and repaired directly to his private apartments by the door of the last drawing-room where hung the portrait of Queen Hortense. At the same moment General de Saint-Arnaud and I had left the reception rooms by the opposite door, and after crossing the hall and the courtyard arrived at the Prince's private room scarcely two minutes after he had entered it with M. de Morny and M. de Persigny, who had

articles sum up the value of the publication more severely, though not more justly, than does M. de Maupas. It is the plague spot of French history that one cannot find an impartial account of any important event in any history proper, and has to wade through numberless “memoirs” to get at a proximate appreciation of the truth. There is little doubt that the sum named by M. de Maupas is correct, but according to Victor Hugo gold was to be had for the asking on the day of the *Coup d'État*.—*Trans.*



been waiting for him in M. Mocquart's private room.

Farther on. "At midnight M. de Morny joined his accomplices at the Elysée. . . ." What I have just said shows this to be another error. Let me add that at eleven o'clock every one had left the Prince's room, that the Prince himself had gone to his apartments, and consequently that any one who presented himself there *at midnight* would have found the place shut up.

Farther on, still the same page. "For the last hour M. de Maupas had been waiting, seated before the placards that were to cover the walls of Paris that same night. Morny was the last to come into the room." As I have already shown, M. de Morny was the first to arrive with the Prince in his room, and so far from having waited an hour I got there two minutes after the Prince.

On page 186. "General Magnan," says M. Claude, "only joined those four actors (in the scene) a little while afterwards." General Magnan did not for one single moment appear at the Elysée during the meeting of which M. Claude treats. He received his orders in writing on the 2nd December at three in the morning.

And now for the infamous slanders.

Same page, 186. "The Prince opened a wardrobe and took from it four packets addressed respectively to his accomplices. The first packet for M. de Morny contained 500,000 francs. He received it that he might go and take possession of his post as Minister of the Interior. The second, addressed to de Saint-Arnaud, contained likewise 500,000 francs, *plus* 500,000 francs for Espinasse. The third, addressed to de Maupas, contained, in addition to the money, the list of all the representatives, generals, men of letters, leaders of parties, who were to be arrested. The fourth packet and the smallest was intended for the police of the Elysée. It only contained 100,000 francs. . . ."

The whole is a tissue of abominable impostures. The Prince handed to M. de Morny or to me no sum of money whatsoever, absolutely none. Everything is false in this theatrical version of pretended and prepared packets of money. But, however low the origin of this infamous calumny, I for my part cannot rest content with despising it as I despise its authors, I wish once more to protest against it with all the indignation of my revolted conscience.

I have said that the Prince gave 10,000 francs to General de Saint-Arnaud to be distributed the next morning in gratifications. Assuredly it is not of this fact, generally ignored, that M. Claude wished to speak. He wished to make a great scandal, and he has not even had the merit of invention. This miserable imposture he simply copied from one of those libels of which we spoke in our preface, and the author whereof was condemned to a long term of imprisonment to purge his already not very honourable career.

But at the risk of making too much of this unknown who wrote the "Mémoires of M. Claude," let us show once more the improbabilities that have escaped his pen.

According to M. Claude it is during this evening of the 1st December and *at midnight* that the Prince handed me "the list of all the representatives, generals, men of letters, and party leaders" who had to be arrested immediately after my return to the Prefecture of Police. The real M. Claude, however, knew better than any one that such numerous and important arrests could not be arranged for at a moment's notice, especially under the conditions they had to be made. It would have been madness to pretend to do so. Those arrests we had prepared more than a week beforehand, and to make them effectual nothing less could have been done.\*

\* The most conclusive evidence of the utter and foundless fabrication of the "list" episode is to be found in the book itself, though it has

We repeat once more that this new fabrication is so clumsy and so badly conceived that it is sufficient in itself to prove that the libel of which it is a part could not have for its author a former chief of the detective police, M. Claude.

The night that still separated us from the 2nd December was not to be spent by all of us in the same fashion. To the Prince it was a night of calm repose, of the repose God gives to the conscience when it has accomplished a great duty. His orders had been given; he could do nothing but to wait until the moment when he was to show himself to the people. To M. de Morny, whose functions did not actively mix him up with the execution of the preliminaries to the *Coup d'État*, this night was what his predilections might choose to make it. He also might have found it an interval of rest.\*

To General de Saint-Arnaud and to me it became the moment for decisive action.

General de Saint-Arnaud had to inform General Magnan of the part reserved to him, to give him his instructions; he had also to give his orders to Colonel Espinasse for the investment of the Assembly; in short, to see that each wheel of this marvellous mechanism of the French army was ready to move at the required moment.

Only a soldier can form an idea of the thousand and one precautions the eve of a battle imposes upon the general who commands. General de Saint-Arnaud foresaw, prepared everything; and

probably escaped M. de Maupas' notice in the hurry of composition. According to the book M. Claude went to see M. Thiers about ten o'clock at night to warn him of his arrest. Therefore he was better informed than his chief himself, who according to him did not get the list until *midnight*.—*Trans.*

\* He didn't. On leaving the Elysée he went to a private ball. It was at this very entertainment that he gave the answer, almost become historical by now. A lady asked him: "M. de Morny, if there were a *Coup d'État*, and the President made a clean sweep of the Assembly, what would you do?" "Be sure, Madame, that I would find myself on the side of the handle," came the reply.—*Trans.*

if one compares the attitude of the army in presence of the people on the 2nd December with that of the periods of 1830 and 1848, one cannot fail to be struck with the contrast. And still they were the same soldiers, the same children of the people, the heirs to the same principles, but they had not the same chiefs; there are circumstances when the chief makes the soldier.

To be just, it is both to General de Saint-Arnaud and to General Magnan that this praise should be awarded. In accepting the command of the army of Paris the latter was well aware that one day he would have to throw in his lot with that of the Prince. He had been warned, and given the assurance of his co-operation; one could build upon his faith as on his courage.

He himself had asked not to be informed beforehand of the events of which he was to take so large a share; he wished to remain the soldier who obeys his chief, takes no part in the political movement, and confines himself to his military rôle; this rôle sufficed to render his name illustrious.

On leaving the Elysée I had offered a seat in my carriage to Colonel de Bévillé, who was entrusted with all the documents we sent to be printed. He was to spend the night at the national printing works to superintend this operation, and above all to watch that the secret, once having made its way into the building where the necessities of material execution compelled us to thrust it a few hours before events, did not get out of it again.

Besides, M. de Saint-Georges, the director of the national printing works, was also devoted to the Prince; one might depend on his active and intelligent co-operation. He had received instructions to have always within call a sufficient number of intelligent workmen ready to execute such work as was often required in a hurry at the hands of the national printing works. Thanks to this precaution an extra call of workmen outside the

regular hours was no longer calculated to arouse suspicion.

A company of mobile gendarmerie, commanded by brave Captain de la Roche d'Oisy, arrived at the printing works at the same time with Colonel de Béville. The doors of the building closed upon them; they remained hermetically shut up for the whole night. Sentries posted inside each door, at each window, had the strictest orders to prevent all communication with the outside. It is but just to state that there was not the least attempt to contravene the given instructions.

Once those indispensable precautions taken, the work of printing began, and a few hours afterwards MM. de Saint-Georges and de Béville, having taken possession of all the proclamations of the President, of the Minister for War, and of the Prefect of Police, only awaited the hour previously agreed upon to bring them to me.

On leaving Colonel de Béville, at eleven o'clock at night, I rapidly went the round of the principal thoroughfares leading to the Prefecture of Police, before entering the building itself. A profound tranquillity and evident ignorance of what was being prepared prevailed everywhere.

I set to work immediately. The heaviest part of the work was just beginning for me. On the success of the principal measures to be executed by the Prefecture of Police depended undoubtedly the success of the *Coup d'État* itself. An important arrest, such as, for instance, that of General Lamoricière, of General Changarnier, or of a deputy of the Mountain, had but to miss fire and the alarm would instantly be given. The terrible consequences of such a failure need not be insisted on. The regiments might in such an event be listening to the voice of one of their old generals before they had received the orders of their chief. Was not hesitation on the part of the army to be apprehended from that moment? Might we not also



fear the immediate assembling of all the hostile representatives, and might they not constitute a centre of resistance the more threatening from having a man of action at its head and part of the Paris population for an escort?

The Mountain, if warned, would have immediately sprung to arms; its members were perfectly ready. The cover of the night would have allowed them to throw up barricades, and the first glimmering of dawn, instead of beholding our complete triumph, would have witnessed the dire spectacle of a great city a prey to the commotion that results from the violent shock of opposing parties.

I hid not from myself an atom of the immense responsibility I had undertaken. With the most minute attention I myself had prepared the smallest details of this vast enterprise.\* The essential point was to have for instruments men safe and sure, ready to follow me at the peril of their lives.

Every arrest was to be personally directed by a commissary of police. For the last month I had successively interviewed each of those magistrates in my private office. I had chosen from among them for the most important missions those whom I judged to be the most energetic. With one signal exception I found the most absolute devotion.\*

All those who were to act on the 2nd December had been ordered not to stir from their official resi-

\* I had been assisted in those preparations by two high functionaries of the Prefecture of Police. One was personally attached to me; he had accompanied me throughout my career as private secretary. I knew the reliance I could place on his devotion and discretion. The other directed one of the important branches of the Prefecture, and though he was related to M. Guizot, for whom he cherished a sincere affection, I was firmly convinced that the sentiment of duty would religiously make him keep the secrets I confided to him, or even those he might guess. The co-operation of those two auxiliaries proved of the greatest value to me, and I beg them to accept in this place a renewed expression of my gratitude.

\* One single commissary, when I gave him the order to arrest one of the members of the Assembly, appeared to me to hesitate. Instead of the zealous interest I had met with from his colleagues I met with

dence during the previous evening, and received at two o'clock in the morning instructions to present themselves at the Prefecture of Police at a given moment and within short intervals, between three and half-past four A.M. At their arrival they were absolutely isolated from one another. Each of them was introduced to my room by himself and received every one of his instructions from me alone. I might without risk have trusted to those faithful magistrates, disclosed to them at this eleventh hour the importance of the act in which they were to co-operate. Nowhere have I seen the sentiment of duty, the religion of secrecy, more strictly observed than at the Prefecture of Police. But it is always an error at such a moment to tell what may be kept hidden; consequently I confined myself to announce to each commissary the arrest with which he was entrusted, leaving him in ignorance that he was participating in a collective measure.

This hour, during which I gave their instructions to my commissaries, is one of those that have left the most vivid recollections. If, as I have said, not one of them received from me the secret of the collective act with which they were associated, all, intelligent as they were, understood that they were co-operating in the *Coup d'État* so long and so often foretold. If none of them interrogated me, if none hesitated, I could but think that in their inmost heart they had weighed the responsibility they were about to undertake.

When I said to one, "You will proceed to the arrest of General Changarnier;" to another, "Go

objections. They clearly showed me that he had fathomed our designs, and that if not absolutely hostile he did not care to engage in an enterprise the importance of which frightened him. His features bore the traces of the doubts that agitated him. This man was afraid. It will be easily understood that I could not allow an agent who had surprised, or at least guessed, our secret to remain at large. Consequently he only left my room to be put in a place of surety. All indiscretion on his part was avoided. Let me add that this commissary not not M. Claude.

and arrest General Lamoricière ; ” to others again, “ Go and arrest General Bedeau, M. Thiers, General Cavaignac,” all representatives of the nation, illustrious men with the prestige of their high positions in the State or their eminent services upon them, must they not have immediately guessed, from the importance of the personages pointed out, the importance of the enterprise in which they engaged ?

But they perceived at the same time that the Prince accompanied his resolve by the most energetic measures, and they knew from experience that, given sufficient vigour, one may dominate the most critical situations. This to them was already a condition of confidence, and I may add that my language and my attitude did but increase it.

But however devoted those excellent auxiliaries were, it required at such an hour as this more than a dry and commonplace order ; one had to stimulate their zeal, to excite their energy, communicate to them the faith with which their chief was animated. To each I recalled in brief terms what his duty required of him, the perils courage and energy can brave when the soul is inspired ; I enjoined them to shrink from no measure in the execution of their mission ; but above all to protect and to respect, at the risk of their own lives, those men whom they were about to arrest. I strove to imprint my exhortations with the ardour I myself felt. Standing before them I held their hand in mine, and I felt from the trembling which my appeal to their devotion evoked that I was understood, that my determination to succeed was shared ; and this beneficent excitement often experienced in presence of a great duty to be accomplished, and which doubles both faculties and power, I felt my agents to be possessed of it. I was certain of the success of the delicate operations they were about to perform. Every few minutes, and without as yet communicating with any of his

colleagues, a commissary left my room, repaired to a spot I had indicated to him, where he found ready and complete the staff necessary to an arrest which had to be made under such conditions of security that failure was almost impossible to result.\*

*Officiers de paix*, commissaries of police (the equi-

\* With renewed regret we are compelled to recur once more to the sorry "Mémoires" of M. Claude. It was but natural that he should think that in the narrative of the *Coup d'État* the incidents most eagerly looked for would be those supposed to have occurred at the Prefecture of Police during the night of the 1st and 2nd December. This time M. Claude has built up a scene altogether imaginary, and with the laudable intention of adding to his importance. "The next day," he says (vol. i. p. 9), "*at midnight* I was convoked like all the other commissaries of police to the Prefecture of Police in the private room of M. de Maupas."

It is absolutely false that there was either a convocation or a meeting of the commissaries of police *at midnight* in my private room. At no hour of this night of the 2nd December had there been a collective meeting of a number, however small, of commissaries of police in my private room. As has been seen, I received separately, and from three to half-past four, only those commissaries of police to whom the important political arrests were to be entrusted. M. Claude was not of the number. He did not enter the Prefecture of Police during that night. But the imposture takes a more serious character. Let us cite the words which M. Claude puts into my mouth as being addressed to the commissaries of police assembled there. "Here are the warrants to arrest Generals Cavaignac, Lamoricière, Changarnier, Le Flô, Colonel Charras, MM. Thiers and Baze . . . Messieurs, those arrests must absolutely be made before daybreak."

To credit me with such language *at midnight* and in presence of *all* the commissaries of police assembled is an improbability and a blunder. To deliver up our secret *at midnight* to all the commissaries of Paris, among whom several were notoriously devoted to our adversaries, would have been too ingenuous. It would have incontestably have warned our enemies of the peril to which they were exposed.

All the foregoing, however, seems to us merely invented in order to lead up to the following paragraph, in which the pretended M. Claude takes the stage and tries to give himself some importance:—

"When he had finished," says M. Claude, "and while a secretary distributed the warrants, M. de Maupas came towards me. I was hidden behind my colleagues, to whom I was a stranger, almost an enemy. M. de Maupas took me aside for a moment and said, 'Have you considered?'"

"I remembered the letter of that morning, the recommendations of M. Thiers.\* 'I'll do my duty,' I answered, bowing to M. de Maupas.

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\* I had written the note about the pretended interview with M. Thiers on page 348 before I got thus far with my translation.—*Trans.*

valent of our English superintendent), sergeants, and simple agents were thus on foot at the self-same hour, and without having caused the least alarm to the city, or having been enabled to gather the slightest clue of what they themselves were pre-

‘I remain faithful to my post and can but obey my chief.’ ‘You are an honourable man and a good citizen,’ M. de Maupas added, whereupon he left me.”

This dialogue is a lie from the beginning to the end. I did not breathe to M. Claude a word of all the foregoing, for the very good reason that he did not set foot into my room on the night of the 1st and 2nd December.

We may be permitted to point out by the way a remarkably clumsy contradiction. It has been noticed that a few pages further back M. Claude made me enter the cabinet of the Prince *at midnight* of the 1st December, and take part in a conference which would have barely given me time to reach the Prefecture of Police at one o'clock in the morning. It is, however, at this hour of *midnight* that M. Claude represents me as receiving at the Prefecture of Police all the commissaries of Paris. The author of the “Mémoires” of M. Claude therefore gives himself within the space of a few short pages the straight and conclusive lie.

M. Claude, incapable of properly adjusting the events which he invents at his own pleasure, tries to give his work a semblance of truth when he adds (vol. i. p. 10): “I reproduce here as an authentic document the fac-simile of the warrant of arrest with which I was entrusted by M. de Maupas.”

But the piece reproduced by M. Claude is not a warrant of arrest. It is simply the *fac-simile of a general order* which I gave several times during the morning of the 2nd of December. And let us note again with reference to this order another denial which M. Claude gives himself. The meeting of the Rue Boursaut, like those held at M. Odilon Barrot's, Dauu's, and other personages—meetings of which we shall have to speak by-and-by—only took place between nine and ten in the morning, after every one knew what had happened during the night. Those various meetings could not be foreseen on the eve *at midnight*, and being unable to guess that there would be a meeting at the Rue Boursaut, I could not hand M. Claude the previous evening *at midnight*, as he pretends I did, the following order:—

“PARIS, 2nd December, 1851.

“Cabinet of the Prefect of Police,

“To disperse, 12, Rue Boursaut, a meeting of representatives, whom to arrest if necessary.

“The Prefect of Police,

“DE MAUPAS.”

This order was handed to M. Claude the 2nd December between nine and ten in the morning, at the same time that similar orders were given to eight other commissaries to disperse some other meetings of representatives. Therefore we cannot repeat too often that everything is invention in these various narratives of this pseudo M. Claude.



paring. Their chief, the head of the municipal police, the motor of the whole of the Paris force, the chief executor, completely ignored himself what the agents he had called out were to do. He had no occasion to ask this day, more than on any previous days when similar orders had been given and carried out, what the prefect meant to do with his men.

A most simple device enabled me to successfully disguise our projects. The surest way to hide an isolated fact from the most attentive observation is to deprive such fact of its exceptional character, and to cause it to disappear among a series of similar ones. The machinations of the various parties allowed the easy application of this theory. The demagogical agitation was a secret to no one. The London refugees, in order to incite their Paris fellow-plotters to an appeal to arms and thus to prepare for their return, constantly announced their arrival as a signal to begin. Several times already I had caused the premature news of this demagogical invasion from across the Channel to be spread among my agents, and had directed the self-same groups which I intended to employ on the 2nd December on various points of the capital. On the 1st December the rumour ran at the Prefecture of Police that Ledru-Rollin, Caus-sidière, and others, would reach Paris that night. Accordingly attention was wholly concentrated upon them, and the renewal of the preparations so often made in their behalf led people to believe that this time also the movement had reference to them.

The civil force of the Prefecture of Police was not the only one that required my attention, and which I had to employ. The Paris municipal guard, while remaining under the control of the Minister for War, was virtually under the orders of the Prefect of Police; it was his special militia, a select militia which always bravely vindicated the trust it inspired. I could depend upon its co-opera-

tion, but its chief, its colonel, a valiant soldier no doubt, was one of General Changarnier's creatures. Only very recently I ascertained once more that his relations with the general continued. Accordingly I could only trust to him to a limited degree. Unable to risk my confidence, I made up my mind to dispense with his co-operation. From time to time I doubled the guard at the Prefecture, and for the last few days I had a company of foot and a company of horse picketed in the courtyard. Their ostensible mission was to move on certain points of Paris where some important arrests of London refugees and heads of secret societies were to be made. On the 1st December I renewed this order, and at three in the morning sent to my private room for several captains on whose implicit obedience I could rely. I gave them my instructions, and at the required hour they occupied the posts indicated at the head of their troopers. Some were to superintend the principal arrests with their detachments. They had orders to take up certain positions at a short distance from the domiciles where the arrests were made. They were to occupy those positions at the hour decided upon for the arrests, and await the summons of the civil authorities to assist the police in the event of resistance within the domicile itself, or from the crowds that might have gathered in the public thoroughfares. They had also to escort the carriages conveying the prisoners, and finally to see them safely lodged in Mazas.

I had chosen Mazas as a place of confinement for our State prisoners—first of all, because not wishing to keep them in Paris, Mazas did very well as a provisional arrangement, and was more than any other a house of detention safe against all attempt at rescue; secondly, because the journey to Vincennes, which had been discussed, seemed to me too long and too dangerous.

The direction of a place of detention as impor-

tant as Mazas became, under the circumstances amounted to a downright political situation. It was not enough to arrest our political adversaries, we had to keep them safe against all attempts at evasion or revolt from within; we also had, in the interest of their personal security, to take measures that in the event of a riot their residence should be secured against all sanguinary struggle.

The governor of Mazas was an excellent servitor, but he had not been appointed to the post with a view to the events that were about to be enacted. This post did not only require a firm and faithful occupant, it required a man of superior judgment, capable of decisive measures at the right moment if confronted with serious contingencies, a man of tact who would take his share of the political misfortunes of men honourably vanquished. I attached great importance to its being thus. I estimated at its full worth the soreness our necessarily vigorous measures would produce; I wished to assuage their bitterness as much as possible.

Without therefore depriving the governor of Mazas of his administrative functions, I decided upon the appointment of a commissioner in extraordinary, under whose orders he would be placed, and whom I invested with discretionary powers. For this post I had selected Colonel Thiérion, of whose energy, tact, and devotion I felt assured. I requested his presence at five o'clock in my private room, where I handed him his nomination and gave him his instructions. I perceived both from his attitude and his language that I had not been mistaken in my estimate of him. Mazas was in safe hands, the State prisoners were placed under an intelligent authority.

But the obligations of the Prefecture of Police on this morning of the 2nd December did not cease with the important arrests and the details they involved. There was still much to prepare and to provide for.

The manifold resources of this vast administration had all to be set in motion either for action or for surveillance, a series of instructions had to be dispatched, and that before six in the morning, so that at seven, when Paris awoke under a new Government, every one should be at his post, some having already accomplished their task, others awaiting events and ready to face them.

Besides the obvious number of agents, who at ordinary seasons perambulate the streets of the capital, insure its safety, its uninterrupted traffic, repress at their very birth all attempts at disturbance, watch the *hôtels garnis*,\* the disorderly houses, the suspected foreigners, the political refugees, the returned convicts—besides those permanent guardians of public order the Prefecture of Police disposes of a considerable number of agents whom nothing points out to public attention, and who therefore are more advantageously situated than the former as regards observation and inquiry. They are the men whom custom designates under the name of secret agents. They are divided into two classes. The first have no relations save with the Prefect himself, whom they inform upon a variety of subjects—on the doings of political parties, on the attitude of the various classes of society, on the thousand and one public or private incidents which it is necessary the Government should know. The others, equally unknown of the general public, were at this period of 1851 divided under four divisional chiefs. Each of those chiefs was entrusted with the movements of his brigade, and had to receive its daily report previous to submitting it to the Prefect. It was against the penetration of those four chiefs of brigade that I had to be most on my guard, and it was from them

\* The term *hôtel garni* includes every dwelling-place the proprietor of which lets out even one *furnished room*. In such an event he is obliged to keep a register, open to the inspection of the police at every hour of the day and night.—*Trans.*

above all that my designs must be hidden while giving them their instructions.

Less versed in the mazes of high politics than in the machinations of plotters, they fortunately believed in a socialistic movement; they looked for no hidden motive in my instructions to set on the watch their agents, who were, at the slightest incident, to come to me immediately and give an account of what they had seen or heard. They had both to acquaint me with the impressions produced by events, and to inform me of the resolutions of the secret societies, to which many of them belonged.

The placarding of the proclamations of the President, of the Minister for War, and the Prefect of Police was an important business. We wanted agents to do the posting, agents to protect the posting, still more agents to protect the proclamations when posted, against the natural violence of our enemies. This numerous staff was divided into squads in one of the courtyards of the Prefecture of Police. Cards prepared beforehand told them both the quarter where they were to operate and the line of march they had to take. Their time was rigorously measured out to them.

The public sale of newspapers, of political publications, the printing of bulletins or proclamations of resistance, was to be strictly prohibited. The commissary entrusted with the task received special instructions; no vendors in the public thoroughfares, no printed matter without my official stamp.

The cafés, the restaurants, the *hôtels garnis* known as the ordinary meeting-places of the socialists might become organized centres of resistance; the list of them was ready, orders had been given to close some before daylight, to watch the others with great care, so as to convert them into traps that would permit the more easy arrests of the noted wire-pullers who would repair thither at the first rumour of events.



In the days of political tumult the regular supply of provisions is one of the necessities to which too great attention cannot be paid. The great arteries that would insure their easy circulation were guarded in a manner so as to be absolutely safe from any attempt at disturbance until the arrival of the troops. The riding schools, the livery stables might become, against their proprietors' will, enforced centres for the recruitment of cattle on the part of the rioters, or even on that of the National Guard on horseback, whose dispositions were, to say the least, doubtful. A careful watch was ordered to be kept that the horses might not be perverted to purposes injurious to our designs.

Finally, besides the arrests which I shall call political, because political dissensions had dug the gulf that separated us from our adversaries, a series of arrests had to be made which to those who had to execute them might be explained by the necessities of public tranquillity; they were those of the socialist leaders, of the everlasting plot-mongers, of the constructors of barricades, the never-changing enemies of every constituted government, who, unable to pardon society for striking them with its laws, for withering them with its contempt, spit their gall against it, and satisfy their thirst for vengeance by trying to drown their worthlessness in a political or social perturbation. It is from those social outcasts, who have nothing to lose, nothing to risk but a life which is often their heaviest burden, it is from those born disturbers that always proceeds the first appeal to arms; hence, to deprive it of its advance-guard, of its chiefs of the first hour, is to disarm the riot, to throw confusion in its ranks.

That I might know those sorry personages I had to wade through the most important *dossiers*\* in

\* The smallest judgment against a man leads to the preparing of a *dossier*; henceforth this man is marked by the police. This applies even to the infliction of a fine.—*Trans.*

the political pigeon-holes of the Prefecture, those referring to the habitual leaders of street warfare. I at least gained this much from the examination, I knew which dangerous enemies to arrest before the combat. It is by the aid of those special indications that I drew up the list of those arrests, which, so perfectly natural on account of the position of the people at whom they struck, would arouse no suspicion either on the part of those who were to execute them, or on the part of those who would be the spectators or the confidants of the situation. They could be executed in batches, without further precautions than those of force; they required nothing but strong arms, which I had in plenty.

Those arrests would economise the chosen and intelligent men, of whom one is always sparing under similar circumstances. During the night I had received the reports from the agents entrusted with the watching and following of suspected individuals.\* Among the number were some that had to be arrested. Those reports gave me the certitude of finding them at their homes. By a strange contradiction it was just on the very day when our adversaries had most to fear from our action that they seemed to have regained their confidence. A complete calm seemed to have succeeded, at least apparently, to the agitation which the reports of the previous days had signalised. No meetings during the day of the 1st December, no conferences; every one who, a few days previously, had forsaken his domicile during the night was tranquilly reposing there now.

At half-past five all my instructions had been given, all my agents had been set in motion and were proceeding to the spots whither their mission called them; and for about an hour the Prefecture

\* Each day a comparatively considerable number of persons were watched and followed. The agents entrusted with this service could therefore attach no undue importance to measures taken with regard to such individuals. Besides, to have some one watched implies by no means the intention of a subsequent arrest.

resumed the tranquillity of its ordinary days. Two devoted friends whom I had sent for to assist my secretaries made their appearance about this time in my private room. My most trusted secretary and one of the high functionaries of the police were with me; we awaited with confidence the first tidings of the execution of my orders.\* To keep up our patience we received from time to time some of the reports which the night superintendents hand in each morning at the termination of their tour of inspection. All were couched in the customary terms; they were laconic and reassuring. "No incident to report;" "The neighbourhood is profoundly quiet;" "Paris is tranquil"—such was, like the previous night, the summary of those reports. Paris slept peacefully; we could ask nothing better while awaiting the serious tidings we expected.

In those moments of surcease and meditation all the reflections I had made before assuming the grave responsibility in which I was now engaged naturally came back to my mind. At that hour, as at the beginning, I remained deeply convinced that I was performing a great duty in thus co-operating to the saving of my country.

Politics put aside, I had to ask myself if I did not deviate from my rôle of magistrate. I remained strictly faithful to it. The plot of which General Changarnier was the spirit aimed at the overthrow of the established power. The machinations of our adversaries were known, the proofs abounded in our hands. To prevent the execution of their designs, to put it out of their power to hurt, became an imperative duty; we accomplished it regularly, lawfully, neither more nor less. A vast demagogical conspiracy threatened public tranquillity; at the same time civil war and revolution were at the

\* The two functionaries alluded to are the self-same of whom I have previously spoken, and who gave me an intelligent, active, and devoted co-operation.

gates. The mission of the Prefecture of Police was to avert this double explosion, to leave nothing untried to prevent those dire calamities. This mission we were fulfilling with firmness. My conscience was at rest. I remained within the right and within the law.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE ARRESTS.

Military Occupation of the Palais-Bourbon.—Colonel de Béville and M. de Saint-Georges at the Prefecture of Police.—Decrees and Proclamations.—M. de Morny's delays.—The Telegraphic Message of M. de Thorigny.—The Army takes up its Position.—Arrests of Generals Changarnier, Le Flô, and M. Baze.—Decrees found at M. Baze's.—Arrests of M. Thiers, Generals Cavaignac, Bedeau, Lamoricière, and other representatives.—An illustrious member of the Mountain the object of great conjugal solicitude.—The Representatives at Mazas.

WHILE we at the Prefecture of Police were taking the measures of which we have given a summary, General de Saint-Arnaud on his side was putting into execution the measures agreed upon. His first act had been to have the interior of the Assembly occupied by the military. This had to be effected without noise, without collision, and in a manner such that the two commissaries who were to arrest M. Baze and General Le Flô would find them, on their arrival at six o'clock, in their apartments and ignorant of everything that was going on.\*

The occupation of the Assembly had been one of those details on which our attention had dwelt with the greatest minuteness. We, General de Saint-Arnaud and I, had on different occasions examined on the spot and at night the conditions,

\* M. Baze and General Le Flô were both, in their capacity of quæstors, lodged in the Palais-Bourbon.

visible from the exterior, under which the Palace was being guarded; we had studied the most propitious hour to penetrate to it—half-past five was the time. The way for a military force to get access to it was this: if the colonel of the regiment, a battalion of which occupied the Palace, felt disposed to second our projects, he could when once within force the soldiers and the officers to yield to his authority, take the command himself, have himself escorted by the remainder of his regiment, and most efficiently hold the position. He might then execute our instructions, namely, favour instead of oppose, as the ordinary guard of the Chamber would inevitably have done, the arrest of the two quæstors, and prevent the representatives once they got wind of the matter from assembling in their official meeting place. It was expedient therefore to select, during the week of the 2nd December, the guard of the Palace from a regiment whose colonel was absolutely devoted to us. General de Saint-Arnaud had personal reasons for counting upon Colonel Espinasse; accordingly his regiment, the 42nd of the line, was chosen for duty that week at the Palais-Bourbon.

Colonel Espinasse had been advised by General de Saint-Arnaud to be ready each night to answer to his call. At three o'clock on the morning of the 2nd December he was summoned to the Ministry of War, he received his orders, and, like the brave soldier he was, he effusively thanked his chief, also his friend, for the proof of affection he had shown him.

At a quarter to six Colonel Espinasse entered, alone first, the Palace.\* He gave his orders and was soon followed by that part of his regiment which had remained without until his assumption

\* We had noticed, General de Saint-Arnaud and I, that the gate of the Palais-Bourbon, which was closed at night, remained ajar every morning from five o'clock. It was one difficulty less for Colonel Espinasse, who got into the Palace by that gate.



of command. At six o'clock he had the doors of the Palace opened to the two commissaries of police, and gave to every sentry the instructions and the password he himself had received. The first part of his mission had been punctually executed.

President Dupin slept tranquilly; if we had not his co-operation, there was no fear of his hostility. As for the quæstors, no noise had troubled their sleep; only the two commissaries in penetrating to their apartments had disturbed their slumbers, but there was no longer aught to fear from their orders and their authority. At this hour we were the masters, and they no longer were.

The occupation of the Palace of the Assembly was the first news that reached the Prefecture of Police. It came at six o'clock, at the very moment that Colonel de Bévillè and M. de Saint-Georges brought me the decrees and proclamations printed during the night. Everything had been executed with the utmost precision at the national printing works. Colonel de Bévillè had acquitted himself of his important mission with his customary devotion and ability. The Prince in reserving it to him knew how much he deserved this confidence. A few moments later the documents were distributed amongst the men, conveyances were waiting for them, and they started for every quarter of Paris and the suburban communes. At half-past seven the work of placarding was finished in Paris, between eight and half-past in the outskirts.

In what words were the resolutions of Louis Napoleon, the event of the 2nd December, made known to France? Such documents do not bear analysis, history claims them in their entirety; we therefore transcribe textually the placards which informed Paris first and a few hours later every town and commune in France of the heroic act which delivered the country from the terrible perils of 1852.

The first document was the Decree of Louis Napoleon, pronouncing the dissolution of the National Assembly, the dissolution of the Council of State, and the repeal of the law of the 31st May. It also announced the forthcoming elections and the proclamation of the state of siege.

The decree ran as follows:—

“In the Name of the French People, the President of the Republic decrees:

“(Art. 1.) The National Assembly is dissolved.

“(Art. 2.) Universal suffrage is re-established. The law of the 31st May is repealed.

“(Art. 3.) The French people are convoked in their constituencies from the 14th December to the 21st December following.

“(Art. 4.) The state of siege is decreed throughout the first military division.

“(Art. 5.) The Minister of the Interior is charged with the execution of this decree.

“Given at the Palace of the Elysée, the 2nd December, 1851.

“LOUIS NAPOLEON BONAPARTE.

“The Minister of the Interior,

“DE MORNAY.”

Then came the proclamation of the Prince—his appeal to the people. The following is the text:—

“FRENCHMEN!

“The present situation cannot last much longer. Each day aggravates the dangers of the country. The Assembly which should be the firmest support of order has become a hotbed of conspiracy. The patriotism of three hundred of its members has been unable to arrest its fatal tendencies. Instead of framing laws for the public welfare it forges arms for civil war, it attacks the power I hold directly from the nation, it encourages every evil passion, it compromises the tranquillity of France;

I have dissolved it, and I call upon the whole of the people to judge between us.

“The Constitution was, as you know, calculated beforehand to weaken the power you confided to me. Six millions of suffrages were a signal protest against this Constitution, nevertheless I have faithfully adhered to it. Provocations, calumnies, insults failed to move me. But to-day, when the fundamental pact is no longer respected even by those who incessantly invoke it, and when the men who have already caused the downfall of two monarchies wish to tie my hands in order to overthrow the Republic, my duty is to frustrate their perfidious designs, to maintain the Republic, and to save the country by invoking the solemn judgment of the only sovereign I acknowledge in France—the people.

“I make a loyal appeal therefore to the whole of the nation, and I say to her: If you wish to perpetuate this state of anxiety which degrades us and compromises our future, choose another in my place, for I will have no more of a power which is powerless to do good, which holds me responsible for acts I cannot prevent, and chains me to the helm when I see the vessel running headlong to destruction.

“If, on the contrary, you have still confidence in me, provide me with the means of accomplishing the great mission I hold at your hands.

“This mission consists in closing the era of revolutions, in satisfying the legitimate necessities of the people, and in protecting her against subversive passions.

“Above all does it consist in creating institutions which will survive individuals, and which may prove the foundations on which to build something stable.

“Convinced that the instability of power and the preponderance of a single Assembly are the permanent causes of trouble and discord, I submit

to your suffrages the fundamental bases of a Constitution to be developed subsequently by the Assemblies.

“1. A responsible Chief chosen for ten years.

“2. Ministers depending on the Executive power only.

“3. A Council of State, composed of the most distinguished men, who shall prepare the laws, and support their discussion before the legislative body.

“4. A Legislative Body which shall discuss and vote the laws, and shall be elected by universal suffrage without *scrutin de liste*, which perverts all election.

“A second Assembly chosen from among all the eminent men of the country, a rectifying power, the guardian of the fundamental compact and of public liberties.

“This system, created by the First Consul at the beginning of the century, has already given prosperity and tranquillity to France; it will be their guarantee once more.

“Such is my profound conviction. If you share it, show it by your suffrages. If on the contrary you prefer a powerless Government, monarchical or republican, borrowed from I know not which past or from some chimerical future, reply in the negative.

“Thus, for the first time since 1804, you will vote with a knowledge of facts, and fully aware for whom and for what you vote.

“If I do not obtain the majority, I will convene a fresh Assembly to whom to hand back the mission I hold from you.

“But if you believe that the cause of which my name is the symbol—that is to say, a France regenerated by the Revolution of '89 and reorganized by the Emperor—is still yours, proclaim it by confirming the powers I ask of you.

“Then France and Europe will be safe against

anarchy, obstacles will vanish, all pretext at rivalry will disappear, because all will respect, in the decision of the people, the decree of Providence.

“Given at the Palace of the Elysée, the 2nd December, 1851.

“LOUIS NAPOLEON BONAPARTE.”

Then came the proclamation to the army.

“Proclamation of the President of the Republic to the Army.

“SOLDIERS!

“Be proud of your mission; you will save the country, because I depend on you, not to violate the laws, but to compel respect for the first law of the country, the sovereignty of the nation, whose legitimate representative I am.

“For a long while you have suffered with me from the obstacles that opposed both the good I wished to do you and the demonstrations of your sympathies in my favour.

“Those obstacles are broken down. The Assembly has attempted the authority which I hold from the whole of the nation. The Assembly has ceased to exist.

“I make a loyal appeal to the people and to the army, and I say: Give me the means to insure your prosperity or choose another in my place.

“In 1830 as in 1848 you have been treated as are the vanquished. Your heroic disinterestedness, your sympathies, and your wishes were disparaged, disdainfully ignored; nevertheless, you are the flower of the nation. To-day in this solemn moment I wish the army to make its voice heard.

“Therefore vote freely like all other citizens; but being soldiers as well, do not forget that a passive obedience to the Chief of the Government is the rigorous duty of the army, from the general to the soldier. It devolves upon me, responsible for my acts to the people and to posterity, to take the



measures that seem indispensable to me to the public welfare.

"As for you, adhere strictly to the rules of discipline and honour. By your imposing attitude aid the country to manifest her will amid tranquillity and reflection. Hold yourselves ready to suppress all attempt against the free exercise of the sovereign will of the nation.

"Soldiers, I do not speak to you of the memories my name evokes. They are engraved on your hearts. We are united by insoluble ties. Your history is mine. There is between us in the past community of glory and misfortune; there will be in the future community of feeling and resolve for the tranquillity and grandeur of France.

"Given at the Palace of the Elysée, the 2nd December, 1851.

"LOUIS NAPOLEON BONAPARTE."

Finally came the proclamation of the Prefect of Police to the inhabitants of Paris. It was couched in the following terms:—

"The Prefect of Police to the Inhabitants of Paris.

"INHABITANTS OF PARIS!

"The President of the Republic by a courageous initiative has frustrated the machinations of parties and will put an end to the sufferings of the country.

"It is in the name of the people, for her welfare and for the maintenance of the Republic, that the event has been accomplished.

"It is to the judgment of the people that Louis Napoleon submits his conduct.

"The grandeur of the act is sufficient to make you understand with what imposing and solemn quietude the free exercise of the sovereignty of the people should be exercised. Therefore to-day as yesterday let order be our banner; let

every good citizen animated like myself by the love of country lend me his support with a firm resolve.

“Inhabitants of Paris !

“Have confidence in him whom six millions of votes have raised to the chief magistracy of the country. When he calls upon the whole of the nation to express her will, only the factious would wish to place obstacles in the way.

“Accordingly every attempt at disturbance will be promptly and relentlessly suppressed.

“Paris, the 2nd December, 1851.

“The Prefect of Police,

“DE MAUPAS.”

Thus everything was punctually carried out. Nothing up till now had hindered the execution of our plan. At seven o'clock I received the verbatim reports of the arrests of Generals Changarnier and Cavaignac. The others arrived at the interval of a few minutes. At forty minutes past six all the arrests were over ; all without exception had been made in the conditions anticipated. They had provoked no serious incident. Resistance was to be foreseen, and had in fact occurred, but brought in its wake none of the misfortunes to be dreaded. The moment an arrest had been made, an agent belonging to the squad entrusted with its execution came to acquaint me with the result. In that way I was informed in less than half an hour of what had taken place at every point of Paris, and I in my turn sent the information to the Elysée and to the Ministry of War.

I waited until M. de Morny should have taken possession of his post and advised me of the fact by telegraph, as had been arranged, to acquaint the Ministry of the Interior with the events of the night. He arrived there at a quarter-past seven. The first and happy tidings that welcomed his arrival was that of the complete success of the enterprise to which he had been initiated.

M. de Morny had, in fact, been belated in the taking possession of his new functions. Instead of reaching the Ministry at a quarter-past six, as had been arranged the previous evening, and of personally acquainting M. de Thorigny with the circumstances by reason of which he came to replace him, M. de Thorigny, when he awoke at seven o'clock, was told of the occupation by the military of his official residence.\* It had been arranged, in fact, that a battalion should take possession of the Ministry at half-past six, that is to say, a quarter of an hour after the time fixed for the installation of M. de Morny. The latter only arriving at a quarter-past seven, the battalion preceded instead of following him. As a matter of course, M. de Thorigny—surprised and at a loss to understand this display of military force in the courtyard and even inside his official residence—M. de Thorigny sent me the following telegraphic message:—

“The Minister of the Interior to the Prefect of Police.

*“2nd December, 7 A.M.*

“What has happened? The courtyard of the Ministry is full of troops.

“DE THORIGNY.”

To this message I sent the following answer:—

“The Prefect of Police to the Minister of the Interior.

*“2nd December, 7.10 A.M.*

“M. de Morny is charged to tell you; he will be with you in a moment. Wait for him.

“DE MAUPAS.”

Even before the arrival of this message I had been very uneasy at not receiving the communica-

\* The Prince had wished to explain himself to M. de Thorigny the reasons that compelled this separation. The letter that contained the explanations was to be handed to M. de Thorigny by M. de Morny on his arrival, before anything had transpired of what was being prepared.

tion which it was arranged M. de Morny should send me by telegraph immediately on his arrival at the Ministry. The execution of our plan was arranged minute by minute; a delay like this in the taking possession of the Ministry of the Interior was incomprehensible. I could address no despatch to the Minister to clear up the mystery. In whose hands would it have fallen? I only knew through the operator seated at the dial close to my private room that his colleague at the Ministry of the Interior was at his post and that our communications were perfect. The reader will understand my surprise when at seven o'clock, namely, three-quarters of an hour after M. de Morny should have entered upon his functions, I received the foregoing message signed by M. de Thorigny.

At last, at a quarter-past seven, M. de Morny arrived at the Ministry of the Interior and handed the Prince's letter to M. de Thorigny. This abrupt notice, under the conditions that it came to him, deeply grieved the Minister whom it deposed. M. de Thorigny, as we have already said, was a man of lofty principles and honour. He was sincerely devoted to the Prince; he had shown himself ready on the 17th November to bring matters to a crisis. Without immediately weighing the grave responsibilities of which he was thus divested, it seemed cruel to him to be replaced at the supreme moment. What really grieved him was not the loss of a portfolio which he had never coveted, but the want of confidence of the Chief of the State whom he had loyally served. He retired from the position in a manner worthy of himself; his attitude showed all the nobleness of his character.

The occupation of the Ministry of the Interior was only an episode in the military movement which at the same moment embraced the whole of the capital. With that scrupulous punctuality which the sentiment of duty made him bring to all

things, General de Saint-Arnaud had at the hour fixed upon—half-past six—called out all the troops that were to occupy the positions indicated in the “plan of dispositions in the event of a conflict.” All those points were occupied.

The bearing of the troops was excellent; they guessed from the very beginning, though they had no definite idea of the nature of, the event to which they were co-operating. When towards seven o'clock their presentiments were confirmed by the reading of the placarded proclamations, there was everywhere a genuine outburst of satisfaction.

The army had still to avenge two cruel affronts very vividly present to its memory, those of 1830 and 1848. On those two sad occasions it had been abandoned by the supreme power and given up by several of its chiefs. To-day it had at its head a Prince who possessed its whole confidence. The army was still under the sympathetic influence of the noble words which Louis Napoleon had addressed a few days before to its assembled officers: “If ever the hour of danger struck, I should not do like the governments that preceded me, and I should not say to you, ‘Go, I follow you;’ but, ‘I go, you follow me.’”

At a quarter-past eight I had all the verbatim reports relative to the various arrests, and the majority of the commissaries who had been entrusted with them had come back from Mazas and reported themselves to me in my private room. They verbally completed the summary information of their written statements. I need not say that I thanked those brave auxiliaries with all my heart for their courage and ability. They knew by now the great event with which they had associated themselves; they felt very proud, full of enthusiasm, and impatient to proceed to the new posts I indicated to them. Nothing could equal the excitement at the Prefecture of Police. We have said



that the arrests had been carried out without any serious incidents. It may be interesting to give some details of the circumstances that had attended them. It will be understood, though, that on this point we are pledged to considerable reticence.

The commissary of police, Lerat, who was to arrest General Changarnier had left the Prefecture at thirty-five minutes past five. Like his colleagues he had found at a certain spot the necessary conveyances, and at another spot a superintendent and twenty police agents who had instructions to accompany him.

At ten minutes past six a picket of the mounted Municipal Guard and another on foot, under Captain Baudinet, took up their positions at No. 7 of the Rue Royale, within a stone's throw of General Changarnier's residence, No. 3, Rue du Faubourg St. Honoré.

At six o'clock the commissary rang the bell at General Changarnier's.

But the concierge was absolutely devoted to his illustrious tenant; he had, moreover, been on his guard for a very long time; he did not open at night without very valid reasons. To his questions before opening M. Lerat replied in a manner that did not altogether satisfy him. The concierge asked for additional explanations, to which the commissary, who foresaw the resistance he was likely to meet, answered very complacently.

During this colloquy, skilfully prolonged, his superintendent got into the courtyard by passing through a grocer's shop situated on the ground floor of the building, and opened the principal door to the commissary.

In a moment M. Lerat, the superintendent, and ten of his men were at the door of the general's apartment; not, however, before the concierge, who had the start of them by a minute. When he saw the agents in the courtyard he rushed up the stair-

case, rang the bell, had time to have the door opened and to warn the general. But our agents came at his heels, and the warning led fortunately to none of the disastrous consequences that were to be feared.

Previous to the verbal details communicated to me by M. Lerat, I had received from the superintendent the following report:—

“2nd December, 6.35 A.M.

“REPORT.

“Arrest of General Changarnier.

“At six A.M. we accompanied M. Lerat, commissary of police, to arrest General Changarnier at his domicile, 3, Rue du Faubourg St. Honoré.

“The concierge having refused to open the door, we effected an entrance to the premises by way of a grocer's shop, and found said concierge leaving the apartment of the general, whom he had had time to warn. The general stood in the doorway in his shirt, with a pistol in each hand, but we do not think he meant to use them, because he surrendered immediately, only saying, ‘I expected the *Coup d'Etat*, and here it is.’

“We have made a careful search, but found nothing but a pair of pistols and a regulation rifle. The general has been taken to Mazas by M. Lerat and a captain of the Republican Guard.

“We have also arrested said M. Harenger, the concierge of the general, in whose lodge we found a parcel of cartridges and two regulation pistols.

“L'OFFICIER DE PAIX (Superintendent).”

Thus the general had attempted no serious resistance; he understood that it would be fruitless, and submitted. He asked to be accompanied by his servant, which request was granted immediately, and went down with M. Lerat to take his seat in the carriage that was waiting to take him under escort to Mazas.

Neither did the arrests of the two quæstors, M. Baze and General Le Flô, both residing in the Palace of the Assembly, afford any serious difficulties from the moment the Palace was occupied by the soldiery. Every issue being guarded, they were virtually prisoners even before they were secured. Still things did not pass off so easily.

The two commissaries, MM. Primorin and Bertoglio, had some trouble to find the apartments of the quæstors in the mazy distribution of the building. When M. Bertoglio entered the room of General Le Flô, the latter was sound asleep; but very quickly recovering from his first emotion, the General dressed hurriedly, while protesting against the measure of which he was the victim. He began by bullying the commissary and threatened to have him shot; then he showered invective upon the President, General de Saint-Arnaud, and the Prefect of Police. It was only after some lively resistance that he left his apartment.

At the foot of his staircase the general came upon Colonel Espinasse, who had remained within ear-shot with a detachment of soldiers; he apostrophized him in the bitterest of terms, and at the same time harangued the men who surrounded him. Both the colonel and his men paid not the slightest attention. Once in the carriage with M. Bertoglio and the two agents who were to take him to Mazas, the general made not the least resistance.

The second quæstor, M. Baze, showed still greater irritation and was even more violent than General Le Flô. He resorted to every means of resistance. He refused to dress himself, and had almost to be taken by force to the carriage waiting for him. Meanwhile he heaped insults upon everybody. Like General Le Flô he vehemently addressed the officers and soldiers who lined his passage. Not a word of sympathy rewarded his attempt. The 42nd remained callous; it had its orders and adhered to them rigorously.

At the two quæstors', as at General Changarnier's, the two commissaries had proceeded to a rapid examination of such papers as might offer a political interest. At M. Baze's two documents were seized that by themselves would have justified the measures of the 2nd December. They were two drafts of decrees indited in view of the hoped-for voting of the Quæstors' Bill of the 17th November.

The first read as follows :—

“Decree:

“The President of the National Assembly.

“Whereas Article 32 of the Constitution provides that—

“The Assembly determines the place of its sittings, fixes the contingent of the military forces necessary to its security and disposes of them.

“Whereas Article 112 of the rules of the Assembly provides that—

“The President is entrusted with the measures for the safety of the National Assembly from within and from without.

“By virtue of which he exercises in the name of the Assembly the right granted to the legislative power in pursuance of Article 32 of the Constitution to determine the number of military forces necessary to its security, and to dispose of them.

“Requires M . . . to take the immediate command of *all the forces both of the army and the National Guard stationed within the first military division* with the view of insuring the safety of the National Assembly.

“Given at the Palace of the National Assembly the . . . .”

The second decree was as follows :—

“Decree :

“The President of the National Assembly, &c.,

“In virtue of Article 32 of the Constitution ;

“In virtue of Article 112 of the rules of the Assembly ;

‘Requires all generals, commanders of detachments or contingents, whether of the army or National Guard, stationed in the first military division, to comply with the orders of General . . . . entrusted with the safety of the National Assembly.

“Given at the Palace of the National Assembly the . . . .”

The vast importance of those authentic documents is such that we might abstain from all comment upon them. Let us only point out that after reading them it will be admitted that we remained within the terms of the strictest truth when, in speaking of the sitting of the 17th November and of the measures taken by us, we insisted upon our right to provide against an imminent aggression.

Even among our adversaries it will occur to no one to deny that the name left in blank in the decree found at M. Baze’s was that of General Changarnier. And in ordering General Changarnier “*to take the immediate command of all the forces both of the army and the National Guard stationed within the first military division*, with a view of insuring the safety of the National Assembly,” the latter would have succeeded in absolutely depriving the Chief of the State and the Minister for War of all authority over the army of Paris. There did not remain in the capital *one single soldier under their orders*. The military force and the supreme power with it were lawfully handed over to General Changarnier, and he could put into execution without resistance the famous project which, as we have already shown, he had expounded to M. Odilon Barrot—he could put the President of the Republic at Vincennes.

The arrests of Generals de Lamoricière and Bedeau and that of Colonel Charras gave rise to incidents similar to those of which we have already spoken with reference to M. Baze. The same fruitless resistance, the same attempts to address the troops on their way to Mazas, the same indif-



ference on the part of the officers and soldiers, and finally the same punctuality on the part of the commissaries in the execution of their orders.

General Cavaignac was more guarded in the expression of his anger. He remained very dignified, and merely inquired about the measures he supposed had been taken with reference to his fellow members. His arrival at Mazas fully enlightened him on the subject.

As for M. Thiers, his arrest led to a curious scene, to say the least. Awakened by the entrance of Commissary Hubault, senior, M. Thiers was at first taken with a genuine terror when told that the former had come to arrest him. His words became incoherent: "He did not want to die, he was not a criminal, he did not conspire, henceforth he would abstain from all politics, he would retire to some foreign country." All this was said and delivered with exceeding volubility, without M. Hubault being able to edge in a word. But when this first agitation had subsided, when the commissary had succeeded in persuading M. Thiers that his life was not in jeopardy, the natural disposition pierced through, and the illustrious orator, sitting down on his bed, began to hold forth as if he had been a simple looker-on of the scene. To the reiterated requests of M. Hubault to get up and dress himself, he responded by a very uncereemonious act, which it would have been more dignified to abstain from. Then, still undressed, he leisurely walked to a piece of furniture, "to get a pair of pistols," as he said. "If I were to blow your brains out," said M. Thiers to the commissary, "do you know that I am armed, and that I would have every excuse to treat you as a malefactor." M. Hubault had not the least trouble to calm this bellicose humour of his interlocutor; he merely showed him that he also was provided with means of defence, and the question of pistols was dropped.

But M. Thiers had gradually regained his confidence, and he began to indulge in a series of pleasantries, so much out of place under the circumstances that they betrayed his efforts to hide the real state of his mind. This painful scene lasted for more than a quarter of an hour, and looked as if it were to last much longer, it evidently being M. Thiers' intention to gain time. What could have been his hopes? M. Hubault finally requested M. Thiers to dress himself, and a few minutes afterwards he took his seat with the commissary in the carriage that was waiting at the door of his residence. Then the attitude of M. Thiers changed all of a sudden. His first terror took hold of him once more. "You are going to have me shot," he said; "I see well enough that I am being led to execution." Being again reassured on that point, he inquired whether he was the only one that had been arrested; he tried to bribe the commissary into letting him escape by the promise of a large reward. At Mazas M. Thiers fell into a state of complete prostration; his strength wholly forsook him. He was immediately attended to with the greatest care.\*

The arrest of the various other representatives was not marked by any incident worthy of notice. MM. Nadaud and Roger showed themselves resigned to their fate. M. Lagrange, who had come home in the morning thoroughly inebriated, indulged in the most violent imprecations. M. Cholat, rendered powerless at first by the dread of being shot, plucked up a moment of fictitious

\* A somewhat similar version of M. Thiers' arrest, and probably derived from the same source that supplied M. de Maupas, namely, the detailed report of Commissary Hubault, has been often contradicted by Royalists and Republicans alike. Still it is but just to say that the contradiction on both sides was of the most lukewarm nature. Those who knew M. Thiers best, and from personal experience, Alex. Dumas the elder among the number, thoroughly believed in it. During the Revolution of June, 1830, M. Thiers did not show himself the bravest of the brave.—*Translator.*

courage by the absorption of an enormous quantity of absinthe. MM. Miot, Valentin, Baune, offered no resistance, nor was there any serious difficulty with regard to the demagogues who did not belong to the Assembly, and the majority of whom were pretty well accustomed to the visits of the police.\* May we add one amusing anecdote to this serious narrative? It would seem that however sad the fate of the impounded representatives, there was still room left for envy.

During the morning of the 2nd December I received the visit of a very charming lady, whose husband, an eminent lawyer always, a violent Mountaineer at times, had not been arrested. Mme. C. came to protest against this omission. "I do not know what to do," she said; "our house is absolutely invested by the most sinister-looking individuals. A gang of bandits are asking my husband to head the resistance, to provoke a revolt; he still preaches patience; but they pester him so that he'll be compelled to yield. They'll take him to the barricades and have him killed. There is but one means of setting my mind at rest, to save the life of my husband, and it lies in your power, M. le Prefet, to grant it." Seeing that I did not exactly catch her meaning, that I was at a loss to understand the exact nature of her request, Mme. C. resumed: "It is easy enough, M. le Prefet; have him arrested. I know you will not harm him, and, at any rate, his abominable friends will not be able to worry him when he is in Mazas." But the peaceable member of the Mountain had at that hour done nothing as yet to justify the rigorous measures so ingeniously sug-

\* It will be easily understood without our insisting on it that the particulars we are enabled to give of the arrests are extracts from the reports of the commissaries of police and the superintendents at the very moment when they executed the instructions of the Prefecture of Police. If we have not reproduced those documents, which we copied at the time, it is because some of their details might have offended the susceptibilities of interested parties.

gested by Mme. C. in an excess of conjugal devotion. I declined to have recourse to the heroic means pointed out, but promised her to have her husband carefully and closely watched. I kept my word, and in that way obtained proof positive of what indeed I had always more than suspected, that the most fiery speeches were often nothing more than a concession to too-exacting friends; that in the hour of danger the ticklish part of the business was left to the simpletons and fanatics of the party, to those whose mission it is to get themselves killed to further the ambition of a few. Our republican barrister remained within the wholesome and traditional doctrines of the revolutionary aristocracy. He draped himself in his dignity of party leader, was lavish of advice, shrank from no extreme—in speech—exhausted himself still more than in the tribune in protestations of his love of liberty, of the people, of democracy; but that was all. Nevertheless there came a moment when his warmth of speech excited the apprehension of the agents appointed to watch him. The reader may therefore judge of my surprise when I received a report telling me of the arrest of the impetuous member of the Mountain. Had my agents taken him *au sérieux*, or had Mme C. been more successful with my subordinates than with me and prevailed upon them to lend themselves to her prudent solicitude? At any rate the lady might sleep in peace, at last she had obtained the favour she so earnestly craved; her husband was under lock and key.\*

What was the attitude of the illustrious prisoners whilst at Mazas, what was their treatment? To what severities were they exposed, what consideration did they receive? How much faith are we to place on the fantastic tales of which

\* We are not bound to the reticence of M. de Maupas with regard to names. The deputy in question was M. Adolphe Crémieux, the celebrated barrister.—*Trans.*

the demagogical and radical pamphleteers have made themselves the editors? We do not care to reply to the question ourselves. We do not even think it meet to reproduce here the courteous testimonies of Generals Changarnier and Cavaignac, thanking the Prefect of Police for the exceptional considerations they had received, for the manner in which their short captivity had been lightened. We will simply let the two commissioners in extraordinary to whom we confided the task of representing us at Mazas, speak.\* This report, written at Mazas itself on the 2nd December, offers the interest of dealing with the question at the actual moment. No account can stand against this document, which, as far as its author knew, was never intended for publication.

The report read as follows :—

“ MAZAS, 2nd December.

“ At half-past five, Colonel Thiérion and I left the Prefecture of Police on our way to Mazas.

“ The Colonel's mission was to prevent all attempt at rescue; mine to superintend the administrative arrangements, and to see that the expected prisoners were treated with the greatest consideration.

“ Mazas prison is situated on the Boulevard of that name. The principal entrance consists of a heavy door with very solid railings, placed somewhat farther back than the pavilions to the right and left which form its frame. In the wall of the latter has been built a door for the ordinary traffic of the building. The large gates are only opened for carriages.

“ Both those entrances open upon a yard that precedes the prison proper. At the bottom of the

\* I have only spoken of Colonel Thiérion, because he alone was virtually entrusted with an official mission. To make assurance doubly sure we gave him a coadjutor, a man of social position, who was also instructed to see that nothing was left untried to lighten the confinement of our political adversaries.



yard is a short flight of steps that leads to another door, which gives access to the building. The first apartments are devoted to the administration.

"When we got to Mazas the Colonel presented to the warden on duty the order of the Prefect of Police. We crossed the yard and ascended the staircase to the apartment of the Governor. The latter was still in bed. We waited for him in the dining-room. The Colonel handed him a letter from the Prefect. 'I am at your service, Messieurs,' said the Governor when he had read it, and went away to finish dressing. We went down to his office adjacent to the archives of the prison. The Colonel went away to inspect the military posts. I remained with the Governor to see to the interior arrangements necessitated by the numerous arrests that were being made at the same hour. Injunctions to act with the greatest circumspection were given to the whole of the staff. The arrangements concluded, the Colonel joined me in the archives.

"It was six o'clock. The arrests were to be made between six and half-past. Considering the distances, the first prisoners would make their appearance at Mazas towards seven o'clock.

"At five minutes to that hour the noise of wheels coming from the boulevard was heard. Almost immediately afterwards the door of the left lodge opened and admitted Colonel Charras and the agents that accompanied him. The Colonel's features showed the traces of violent agitation. He quickly ascended the shallow flight of steps and entered the archives, but his gait was nervous, and his attitude displayed great irritation.

"Scarcely had Colonel Charras disappeared within the prison than the great gates swung back to admit two cabs, escorted by a mounted picket, which noisily clattered into the yard and took up its position at the foot of the flight of steps. The first cab was opened and General Lamoricière alighted

from it. He was accompanied by a commissary and an officer of the municipal police (superintendent). The second cab contained nothing but agents.

"The general was in mufti; he looked very crestfallen. With a heavy tread he ascended the stairs; every one uncovered, he was received with the greatest marks of respect. When the General left the archives to go to the room prepared for him he requested that the last five volumes of the "French Revolution," by M. Thiers, might be sent for from his home. His request was immediately complied with.

"Meanwhile the arrivals succeeded each other rapidly and the archives were getting crowded. At every table occupied by one of the officials stood in turns a general, a deputy, or some political personage whom fate had brought hither. He gave his name, his age, his grade, his title; the whole was inscribed, after which he was conducted to the interior of the prison.

"Those whose arrest had been accompanied by a seizure of papers were taken to the private office of the Governor. This was the case with Deputy Miot; a heap of documents had been found at his domicile. He was very violent, and threatened everybody. We had the greatest difficulty in calming him.

"Others preserved a more peaceful attitude. Deputy Valentin submitted to his fate with a kind of phlegmatic ostentation. He did not take his broad-brimmed soft wideawake off, his long blue cravat and turned-down collar still further enhanced his very juvenile appearance. While they were making out the warrant for his reception he quietly continued to read his paper.

"From one end of the archives to the other there were greetings of recognition; bitter smiles, signs, and words were exchanged. Generals Changarnier and Cavaignac met. 'How he treats us,' said

General Changarnier across the room to General Cavaignac, 'how he treats us. Well, he makes a mistake, because he would certainly have been re-elected next May, but now. . . .'

"After which General Changarnier asked to be allowed to write to his sister. The note ran as follows: 'Set your mind at rest, I am treated with the greatest consideration. M. de Maupas treats me like a gentleman.'

"About half-past eight all the arrests were over. To the noise and commotion of the morning succeeds the ordinary calm of Mazas. There is not the least attempt at escape. Nor has there been any attempt from the outside to rescue the prisoners. The only thing noticeable is a group or so of loiterers round about the prison, which the agents quietly disperse now and then. Our measures are taken to energetically resist all attack if necessary.

"The Commissioner in extraordinary delegated,  
"X. . . ."

Our instructions had been punctually executed. No precaution had been neglected to guard our illustrious prisoners against any attempt on the part of foes or friends, and every measure that was possible had been rigorously taken to soften the severities inseparable from the critical situation.

The most important and decisive fact of what is called the 2nd December was accomplished. The plot of General Changarnier was foiled by his arrest and that of his principal accomplices. The demagogical uprising was equally paralyzed in its action; the leading organizers of it were at Mazas, only the general utilities and supernumeraries remained at large; and we were soon enabled to judge, by what this insurrection deprived of its leaders attempted to do, of what it could have done if the latter had been at its head to recruit the revolutionary masses and to lead them to battle.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## PACIFIC RESISTANCE.

The Aspect of Paris during the Morning of the 2nd December.—Copies of the Rep<sup>ts</sup> addressed to the Prefect of Police.—Meetings of Representatives.—M. Odilon Barrot's Protest.—Attempt at a Sitting at the Palais-Bourbon.—M. Dupin and the Representatives.—Meeting at Count Daru's.—The *Mairie* of the 10th Arrondissement.—First Dispatch of Troops—The Reinforcements of General Forey.—Summons to disperse and its Results.—The 218 ex-Representatives at the Barracks of the Quai d'Orsay.—First Appearance of Louis Napoleon.—The Army of Paris and Colonel Fleury.—The High Court of Justice.

THE noise of the arrests we have just described had quickly spread through Paris. What was the aspect of the capital at that particular moment? People were reading the placards, they saw the army take up its positions at the most important points of Paris, and one glance sufficed to judge of its strength and compactness. We could also, in imitation of those who have written the history of those events from various points of view, give our appreciation of them. Certain as we are that in this, as in all things, we should remain within the limits of the strictest truth, we prefer in our summing up the state of public opinion to profit by a means circumstances placed at our disposal. We were enabled to keep some copies of the reports addressed to us by the agents of the Prefecture of Police. It would be useless to produce them all; the reader will be sufficiently enlightened by the perusal of a few taken at random. The others are almost their textual reproduction. One may implicitly believe in them. They come from men who have no other mission than the surveillance of the public thoroughfares, whose business is to say what they see, what they hear, and who under every régime have done so with an impartiality bordering upon indifference.

We shall only quote two of those reports. They resume the situation in themselves.

“14TH ARRONDISSEMENT, 2nd December, 8.30 A.M.

“REPORT.

“The dissolution of the Assembly and the other measures taken by the President of the Republic are known to the inhabitants of the arrondissements, who do not appear to be much affected by them.

“The majority appear satisfied, and say, ‘Well done’ (‘Il a bien fait’).

“No dangerous gatherings.

“Quiet prevails everywhere.

“L’Officier de Paix, DE BEAUMARCHAIS.”

“FAUBOURG ST. ANTOINE, 2nd December, 8.40 A.M.

“We have just traversed the quarter of the Hôtel de Ville, the Faubourg du Temple, the Rue Menilmontant, the Faubourg St. Antoine, the Rue St. Antoine.

“Everywhere the crowds are very compact, but nothing serious is to be apprehended; everyone applauds the President, and nothing is heard but, ‘Well done, well done;’ ‘Vive Napoléon.’

“L’Officier de Paix, HENRICY.”

These words “well done,” alluding to the act of Louis Napoleon, figure in both these reports, written at the self-same hour, and coming from different quarters. They are found textually in a great number of other reports.

The specially political reports on the doings of the various parties are confided to agents of a different category, who have no relations whatsoever with those whose opinions we have just given. Those reports are generally somewhat lengthy, owing to the nature of the subject of which they treat; it would occupy too much time to wade through them. We shall confine ourselves to a summary of those portions treating of the members of the ex-National Assembly. In fact



it is only from the latter that serious complications could come at the beginning, because they alone could place their resistance under the ægis of the law of yesterday.

The decrees and proclamations were scarcely known than there was a great stir amongst the representatives of every shade hostile to the Prince. They called upon each other and devised the necessary measures for meeting within brief delay; they hurriedly consulted about the means of organizing immediate resistance. Groups were formed in each quarter at the leading representative's of the circumscription. In that way small meetings were held in the first hours at M. Crémieux's, the Count Daru's, M. Yvan's, and Odilon Barrot's. If we are to believe M. Victor Hugo, a few members of the Mountain also met at his house at the first news of affairs. Our reports did not mention any meeting of the kind at the great poet's. It is true our agents only watched the dangerous personages. M. Victor Hugo was considered absolutely inoffensive. Events have proved it. Thanks to this our opinion he could enjoy his full liberty and bestir himself as much as he pleased.

Several members of the meeting of the Rue des Pyramides had also repaired to their trysting place; but almost every opinion was represented there, and if resistance was proposed the party of submission to accomplished facts numbered as many adherents as the party of resistance. Nevertheless the latter course was decided on; the meeting was just about to draw up a protest when the arrival of agents of the Prefecture cut short all deliberation. The meeting dispersed with scarcely any show of temper.

At MM. Crémieux's and Odilon Barrot's the agents had equally broken up the sittings. At M. Odilon Barrot's the agents seized a protest already provided with several signatures, amongst others those of M. Odilon Barrot himself, MM. Dufaure,

Piscatory, Duvergier de Hauranne, de Tocqueville, Chambolle, and H. Passy. This protest might be taken as the stereotyped formula of capitulation.

We have already remarked upon the skill of Colonel Espinasse in taking possession of the Palace of the Assembly. The special motive of this occupation was to prevent the representatives from meeting at their official centre. They would not have failed to constitute a government to oppose that of the Prince, and their orders, emanating as it were from their official residence, would have been more attentively listened to than if they had merely emanated from some chance spot, to occupy which at such moments always denotes either defeat or conspiracy.

The reader will perceive how in all things the attention to details becomes an imperative necessity side by side with preoccupations of a higher order. Once master of the Palais-Bourbon, of the quæstors, master besides of President Dupin, master of all the issues, Colonel Espinasse might indeed believe his mission well accomplished. Consequently he gave one of his officers instructions to post at every door a sentry with strict orders not to let any one enter or leave. A single oversight threatened to compromise everything. A door that opens on the Rue de Bourgogne, facing the Rue de Lille, had not got a sentry, and such of the representatives as, after vainly trying the principal entrances, had the idea of making a last attempt at the door of the Rue de Bourgogne, succeeded in penetrating to the palace and installed themselves in their ordinary meeting place. The hall was not even guarded by a sentry. The precaution had appeared useless, so convinced felt everybody that no representative could gain admission to the building itself. The discovery of the representatives in their own hall produced the liveliest commotion. Their sudden appearance could not be accounted for, with the belief that all the doors were guarded. When at

last the omission was found out two instead of one sentry were placed at the neglected door.

The representatives devoted to the cause of the President of the Republic had either remained at their own domiciles or gone to the Elysée to congratulate the Prince. A small number had been to the meeting of the Rue des Pyramides. Hence all those who sought to group themselves and to deliberate might be considered hostile to the Prince, and it was because of this that I had given the strictest orders to disperse any meeting whatsoever of representatives.

The group that was sitting at the Palace itself was, like all the others, opposed to the events that had been accomplished, but it was so small numerically that it understood its own impotency, and merely confined itself to an exchange of impressions and to some unimportant resolutions. Not but what it tried to entice to this attempt at resistance the President of the Assembly, though the latter prudently kept to his apartments. M. Dupin knew the people he had to deal with; he had no taste for useless demonstrations; he took care to explain very clearly to those of his colleagues who went in search of him that he was the fittest judge of the dignity of the Assembly, that they compromised instead of enhancing this dignity by their attempt at useless resistance with so small a number. He showed them the impossibility of getting the Chamber together, the necessity of submitting in presence of a power which seemed to dominate everything. And after this little speech, in which the President had been unable to refrain from some pungent pleasantries, he quitted his colleagues with his stereotyped formula of salutation, "Gentlemen, I have the great honour to wish you good-bye."

The rôle of the ex-representatives united within the Chamber became absolutely critical. Abandoned by their President, having not even a Vice-president to take his place, they became the prey

of two or three members of the Mountain, who were firmly determined, safe from all danger as they believed themselves to be, to cover themselves with glory by means of the most incendiary proposals. If a pardonable sense of self-respect had not detained many of the ex-representatives, they would have left the Palace immediately after M. Dupin, deeming their presence there at such a moment a sufficient discharge of their debt to the Republic.

But the most violent held out; they endeavoured to work their wavering colleagues up to their own pitch, and the whole were just about to recapitulate the resolutions already taken, when a company of mobile gendarmerie entered the Chamber with Major Sausserotte at its head. This brave officer had his orders. They were, to clear the Chamber. He explained in terms of soldier-like brevity the object of his mission, and bade the orators, who tried to incite the soldiers to disobedience, be silent. A moment afterwards the actors in this meeting left, some to return home, two or three to go to the Elysée, some others again to join elsewhere their colleagues who were determined upon resistance.

Shortly after this a new attempt was made to enter the Palace. We have already said that one of the improvised meetings of representatives had taken place early in the morning at one of the Vice-Presidents of the Chamber, Count Daru's; in the Rue de Lille. Several smaller meetings dispersed by the police had gone to Count Daru's, amongst others the one that had been held at M. Odilon Barrot's.\* When they believed themselves

\* The number of representatives who were present at the meeting in the Rue de Lille has been greatly exaggerated. Some estimated it at eighty, others maintain that there were a hundred and twenty members present at the moment of going to the Palace, and a hundred and eighty when the house was cleared. Our own reports gave figures that were not always the same. They varied with the hours. What we can affirm, however, is that at no moment were there a hundred and eighty representatives assembled at Count Daru's.

sufficiently numerous for a demonstration they went out and advanced in a regular column upon the principal gate of the Chamber, which every one as he passed it must have noticed to be strongly guarded. They demanded, uselessly of course, admission, and when persistence was met by the order to "cross bayonets," they retraced their steps to Count Daru's.

The meeting at Count Daru's had been reported to me at its very start. I had deemed it expedient to leave it free, though watched, while it remained pacific; but the demonstration it had just indulged revealed militant intentions—the moment seemed propitious to disperse it. On my requisition a battalion surrounded the house of Count Daru, and its commander had it cleared. There was no resistance, every one left; the most obstinate went in search of a new meeting place. From that moment the Rue de Lille and the approaches to the Palais-Bourbon resumed their thorough tranquil aspect. There were a great many soldiers and a great many lookers-on, but all attempt at disorder was over on that side.

Assuredly we might have flattered ourselves that complications with regard to the dissolved Assembly were at an end; their members had consciously performed what they imagined to be an imperative duty. We willingly admit that they could not allow without protesting against it, the accomplishing of an act against which they had thundered from the tribune and in their journals. For their dignity's sake they could do no less than what they had attempted in their different meetings, and it was our duty to understand this. Those kind of demonstrations remained almost wholly ignored; they were not of a nature to either impress the army or to agitate the population. We had nothing serious to apprehend from them; I had carefully noted their formation and their development from the beginning, and felt myself



justified in abstaining from any severe measures without the slightest danger; with very few exceptions everything had passed off very amiably indeed.

I might no doubt have surely paralyzed all subsequent attempts at resistance on the part of the dissolved Parliament by resorting to arrests in the spots where the ex-representatives had concentrated. But as much as I had inclined to neglect no necessary measure of prevention, as much did I desire to abstain, within the limits compatible with our own security, from needless severity with regard to men whom we esteemed, and the majority of whom were only separated from us by dissensions which it might be possible to efface. It is because of this that at the Palace of the Assembly, at the Rue des Pyramides, at Count Daru's, and elsewhere, I had given orders to first counsel dispersion, to point out afterwards the uselessness and danger of resistance, to abstain from wholesale arrests. As for isolated ones, they should only be resorted to in the event of too violent speech or action, but not before. Some of the latter took place on the Place du Palais-Bourbon. The ex-representatives who were the victims remained deaf to every warning, and were taken in the act of addressing the soldiery.

Up till the time of dispersing the meeting at Count Daru's, we could only congratulate ourselves on our leniency; but the situation was assuming a more serious character, and events will show how for a moment we regretted to have trusted too much to a spirit of moderation on the part of others rather than to the dictates of prudence on our own.

While a part of the Right was assembled at Count Daru's, some ex-representatives had organized a sitting at the *mairie* of the 10th arrondissement.\*

\* The *mairie* of the 10th arrondissement was then situated in the Rue de Grenelle St. Germain, near the Croix-Rouge, in a spacious hotel which has disappeared since the rebuilding of the quarter.

The legion of the National Guard of that quarter was commanded by General de Lauriston; it was thought that, like its chief, it must be devoted to the cause of the Assembly. The sympathy of some members of the Municipal Council was also counted upon. It was this dual consideration that had determined the choice of a locality, which in exchange for advantages problematical at their best, suffered from the drawback of being situated in one of the quarters of Paris least favourable to political agitations. After some little negotiation the ex-representatives had succeeded in having one of the halls of the *mairie* opened to them. They were still but a small number when the news of the breaking up of the Daru meeting reached them; they sent their colleagues word that at the *mairie* of the 10th arrondissement they would find a comparatively convenient place to deliberate in. The news went from mouth to mouth. A few groups, not dispersed as yet, rallied their ranks and made for the *mairie* of the 10th arrondissement. Its doors, in fact, opened to them without difficulty, and the new-comers, with those of their colleagues who had preceded them, installed themselves in a spacious apartment on the first-floor. Immediately a notice was sent to the residences of all the ex-representatives living on the left bank (of the Seine). In about an hour a hundred and twenty members had answered the summons, and their number was increasing rapidly.

The frustrated meetings at the Rue des Pyramides, at M. Odilon Barrot's, and at Count Daru's, were almost exclusively made up of the members of the old majority. We knew that, however irritated some of them might be, they would not lightly proceed to extremes. They numbered among them men whose prudent counsels would have, if necessary, discountenanced all compromising proposals. But the presence at the *mairie* of the 10th arrondissement of a great number of members of the

Mountain, known for their fanaticism, cut every guarantee of this nature from under our feet.

In troublous moments, in hours of supreme crisis, passion and violence too often prevail over prudence and reason. We shall soon see to what degree this was the case the moment it came to a struggle between the peaceable section of the majority and the fury of the Mountain.

This time the ex-members meant to constitute themselves, and to deliberate as if the National Assembly had not been dissolved; and to act in the name of a Constitution which was no longer anything but an historical memory.\* They knew that the moments of unfettered action at their disposal were numbered; not an instant was lost; a standing committee was quickly appointed. To avoid all discussion, such members of the similar committee in the dissolved Chamber as were present were elected. By virtue of this title M. Benoist d'Azy occupied the presidential chair; M. Vitet took his place at his side; MM. Moulin and Chapot resumed their former functions of secretaries, and the orators set busily to work to complete the semblance of a sitting. But more than twenty members wished to speak at once. Each of them, but especially the members of the Mountain, had a proposal ready drawn up, and did not mean to yield to his still more zealous neighbour the initiative of an energetic resolution. All this caused an indescribable tumult, and divested the meeting of two of the conditions essential to regular action, order and dignity.

The orator spoke for the benefit of those without as well as for that of those within. He left the

\* It is not without having carefully weighed the terms employed that we say here, in speaking of the Constitution of 1848, that it "was no longer anything but an historical memory." In fact, its dissolution was an accomplished fact; and without discussing the right of the power that had pronounced it, one might safely affirm that no one, even amongst those who protested against the measure taken, would have seriously maintained that this Assembly might survive one day.

improvised tribune to address from the window some of the groups gathered in the courtyard. The first decree moved pronounced the deposition and impeachment of Louis Napoleon; it was voted, drawn up in haste, and signed without a moment's loss.

The quaestors' proposal, a singular parody of the past, was the time not only carried unanimously, but immediately put into practice.

Article 32 of the Constitution which had ceased to live recovered one hour of fictitious existence. General Oudinot was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the troops and the National Guard of Paris. M. Tamisier, a member of the Mountain, was named his colleague as a corrective to the origin of the general and in order to make the Parisian democracy swallow his name, which was by no means popular with it.

Then followed another decree convoking the High Court of Justice to try Napoleon and his accomplices. All those proposals were voted on trust, almost without being heard, so great were both the noise and the excitement.

After those essential votes, which in themselves constituted the vindication of a right that no longer existed, and gave form, as it were, to the revolt against accomplished facts, came on matters of detail. A decree was voted ordering General Magnan and all the officers of the army of Paris to come and place themselves at the disposal of the Assembly. The immediate liberation of all the arrested ex-members was also voted. The tenth legion of the National Guard was ordered, until something better turned up, to guard and defend this spectre of the Assembly. Furthermore the printing of all these improvisations was voted; but there came not the shadow of a general to submit, nor of a National Guard to defend; and worse than all, there was no printing-press available. As for the liberation of the arrested ex-members, the

idea of trying the doors of Mazas by coercion, cajoling, or connivance was not seriously entertained. The whole attempt, ardent as it was, remained fruitless.

This visible impotency did not, however, discourage the most excited in the meeting. The acrimony of their language only increased. It was a medley of imprecations against the victorious power, a mixture of impracticable proposals; and to make this parliamentary hullabaloo complete, each motion was hailed with interminable cheers of "Vive la République!" "Vive la Constitution!"

As is ever the case in similar paroxysms, the language of reason failed to make itself heard. Whosoever would have dared to counsel wisdom would have been accused of treachery. Several members of the Right asked in vain to be heard; it went against their grain to accept a share in such excesses. How false their situation was becoming! To try to stem the current was not possible; to leave the sitting would have exposed them to the charge of desertion. Hence they were bound *nolens volens* to suffer, in appearance at least, the complicity of an attitude which they could but blame as imprudent and useless.

As the hour advanced the turbulent became more excited still. They could not but know that the Prefecture of Police was kept informed of the doings at the 10th arrondissement. They expected the appearance of a commissary of police and his soldiers at any moment. They wished at all risks, and before the anticipated break up of the meeting, to carry the principal resolutions and to commit their famous decretal improvisations to print.

Towards twelve o'clock there was a stir amongst the crowd, caused by the arrival of two commissaries of police, MM. Lemoine Tacherat and Barlet, who, invested with their official scarfs, presented themselves at the door of the *mairie*. This door was kept by a few National Guards who had taken



sides with the Assembly, so they were obliged to come to a parley, and that amidst a hooting, jostling, hostile crowd. Nevertheless their authority prevailed, and they were just going up to the first-floor when they were reinforced by two companies of Vincennes rifles, which General Magnan had despatched to their aid.

The attitude of the meeting was such as to leave little hope of matters terminating as peaceably as they had done at the Rue des Pyramides, at Count Daru's, and at the Palais-Bourbon. A peaceable solution, a tranquil separation, was not to be looked for. Measures had to be taken to use force, and in the event of a refusal to disperse, to arrest the two hundred ex-members assembled at that moment. A great many more troops than General Magnan had sent were required for this. The officer in command of the two companies and the commissaries of police decided, the former to send for reinforcements, the latter to ask for further instructions from the Prefect of Police.

Meanwhile General Oudinot essayed the prestige of his new dignity of Commander-in-Chief of the army of Paris. He announced his appointment to the officer in command of the rifles, and requested him to assume the defence of the Assembly, and to submit to his order. The omnipotence of strict obedience to instructions showed itself in all its glory at that moment. The captain resisted the general without the least ceremony. He showed himself strong in what he considered to be his right, and to the persistent casuistry of the members and to General Oudinot alike he opposed the imperturbable answer of an obstinate refusal to swerve one inch from what he felt to be his duty. As for the two commissaries, whom they had equally tried to win to their designs, they expressed themselves politely but in so peremptory a fashion that it was considered useless to engage in a new colloquy with them.

The frequent news of the doings at the 10th arrondissement had enabled me to measure the danger of this meeting. If the resolutions that had been passed there became known to the army, they might lead to hesitation on the latter's part. If they were communicated to the inhabitants of the capital they might expose us to the gravest complications.

These débris of legality, collected by the very men who the night previous were still its authorized depositaries, might become a rallying-point for the revolt. At a given moment two constituted governments might find themselves face to face; the natural consequence would be civil war. It was because I saw matters in that light that I had urgently requested General Magnan to have the two commissaries backed up by an imposing force, so as to crush this manifestation at its birth. Two companies would have been insufficient even at the beginning, let alone at the moment when it was absolutely necessary to act.

Time was precious; to apply once more to the commander of the army of Paris was to expose myself to great delays. I made up my mind to use my right of direct requisition, and requested General Forey to move with his troops and guns upon the *mairie* of the 10th arrondissement. I at the same time informed General Magnan and the Minister for War of the grave nature of the incident and of what I had done to cut it short. Immediately on receipt of my advice, General de Saint-Arnaud ordered General Magnan to proceed in person to the spot and to take the most energetic measures. But before the General could comply with this order, General Forey had accomplished his mission, and the resistance of the two hundred and eighteen ex-members was at an end.\*

\* In the various publications that have treated of the events of the 2nd December, the number of representatives present at the *mairie* of the 10th arrondissement has not always been given exactly. The

How had this mission been accomplished? In the interval between the appearance of the two companies of rifles and the arrival of General Forey, the mob had increased; some National Guards, with their arms upon them, had repaired to the *mairie*, and proffered the most violent menaces. Our two commissaries, who remained to watch matters, had to sustain a downright siege. Their attitude was energetic enough; but to the insults heaped upon them they could only oppose a firm and dignified behaviour. In attempting to act prematurely they would only have exposed themselves to failure; hence they prudently elected to wait for reinforcements.

It was known in the improvised parliament that fresh troops had been asked for. It was not difficult to guess that they would be chosen in such a manner as to leave no hope of gaining their co-operation and of placing them under the orders of General Oudinot. It was even said that General Magnan would lead the expedition in person. Nothing but submission remained. The appearance of the head of General Forey's columns dispelled all preparations for resistance in a moment. The tumult became indescribable, and the two vice-presidents combined were powerless to restore silence. In extenuation of the Right, it should be said once more that, except a few of its members, it submitted to, rather than participated in, this very Babel of the most discordant cries, insults, and objurgations. The group of the Mountain was in its real element; vociferations, threats, and violence were within their ordinary method of transacting business. One may imagine what it must have been at such a time.

I had specially enjoined General Forey to surround the block of buildings in the midst of which

number 218 must be considered as absolutely correct. It has been borrowed from the report of the Commissary Lemoine Tacherat, who had taken measures to inform me with the utmost accuracy.

the *mairie* of the 10th arrondissement was situated; it was the first thing he did. Once that movement executed, he proceeded, at the head of a strong detachment, to the courtyard of the *mairie*, and our two commissaries were enabled to immediately execute the orders I had just transmitted to them.

At the outset, when we might still hope that the meeting at the 10th arrondissement would assume no more offensive aspect than those already dispersed, I had instructed my two commissaries to arrest no ex-members save those who made themselves conspicuous by their violent behaviour or language, or by their refusal to separate; but after the resolutions passed by the meeting, after their motions for the impeachment of Louis Napoleon, after their decree of nomination of a commander-in-chief of the army of Paris, after their convocation of the High Court of Justice, matters could not be allowed to terminate in that way. So I issued the following orders—"To summon the meeting to immediately suspend the sitting, and when once the ex-members had left the apartment and were no longer in a compact body, to advise the most peaceful to go their various ways, to lay hands on all the Mountaineers, and afterwards on such members of the Right as had distinguished themselves by their show of irritation." Our commissaries possessed all the requisites necessary for this rapid selection; in fact, the members had pointed themselves out, as it were. Those who threatened the soldiers and our commissaries were to be arrested; there were about sixty of them. Those who remained calm, who only approved rather than be stigmatized as deserters, would be invited to retire. They could not be dangerous at large; whilst if they remained on our hands they would, from their very numbers, be a source of embarrassment to us. I had communicated to General Forey first, afterwards to General de Saint-Arnaud, my instructions

to the commissaries of police, and they in turn, and as an additional precaution, had transmitted the same orders to the officers entrusted with the operations.

At the entrance of General Forey into the courtyard, our commissaries, followed by a strong detachment of troops, presented themselves once more in the apartment where the sitting was held. Part of the detachment accompanied them; the remainder took up its position on the staircase. We must give up all attempt to describe the tumult that ensued. The cries, the insults, the threats of the Mountaineers fell fast and furious upon the agents of public authority, and the voice of the president remained for a long while powerless to make itself heard. But silence was restored at last. After which M. Lemoine Tacherat acquainted the meeting with the mission he had come to execute. Proceeding methodically, he at first spoke only of the immediate evacuation of the apartment where the sitting was held. But at this first injunction a downright storm of indignation burst anew over the apartment. At the request of the president the two commissaries advanced towards the table, and M. Benoist d'Azy informed them that in the name of the Assembly he would read Article 68 of the Constitution to them.

After reading this M. Benoist d'Azy added that it was in virtue of this Article 68 that the Assembly, refused access to their ordinary place of meeting, had met at the *mairie* of the 10th arrondissement, and that it had passed the decree of forfeiture which he also proposed to read.

The decree was couched in the following terms.

“FRENCH REPUBLIC.

“The National Assembly sitting in extraordinary at the *mairie* of the tenth arrondissement,

“Considering Article 68 of the Constitution;

“Considering that the National Assembly is



obstructed by an act of violence in the execution of its mission ;

“Decrees—

“Louis Napoleon to have forfeited his functions of President of the Republic. All citizens are bound to refuse him obedience.

“The executive power devolves by right to the National Assembly.

“The judges of the High Court are bound to meet immediately, on the penalty of forfeiture of their office. The jury is convoked to proceed to the trial of the President and his accomplices.

“In pursuance of which all functionaries, depositaries of the public forces and of authority, are summoned to obey the requisitions made in the name of the Assembly under penalty of forfeiture and high treason.

“Deliberated and voted, etc., etc. . . .”

“It is in virtue of this decree,” added M. Benoist d’Azy, “that the Assembly commands you to obey its requisitions. At this hour there exists in France but one lawful authority, and that is the National Assembly in whose presence you are—it is in its name that I summon you to obey.” I had impressed upon M. Lemoine Tacherat the necessity of using towards the Assembly all the consideration compatible with the execution of his mission. By thus allowing it to engage in discussion he exceeded my instructions. He would have done better to put the question immediately in a summary fashion, and to simply request the meeting to disperse. At the worst he might have replied to MM. Benoist d’Azy and Oudinot insisting upon their qualities, the one as President of the Assembly, the other as Commander-in-Chief of the army of Paris, “The only lawful President of the Assembly is M. Dupin, who absolutely declined to convoke the Assembly. The sole Commander-in-Chief of the army of Paris is General Magnan, who at this very moment sends

his troops to clear the apartment in which you are assembled. A fraction of the Assembly, not numbering by a great many half *plus* one of its members, the number constitutionally required to render its resolutions valid, possesses no qualities to deliberate lawfully. Its pretended decrees are therefore, according to the law, null and void. They not only constitute a revolt against the existing public power, they are from every point of view a violation of the Constitution which they wrongfully invoke. It is nothing less than usurpation." In fact there remained something like five hundred ex-members at large in Paris. Who would have maintained that the real majority of the Chamber was not sitting anywhere at that moment? Might not that majority on its side have taken some different resolution? To what then in fact did those decrees at the 10th arrondissement amount? Even to this Assembly, of which those decrees pretended to take the defence, they were no longer anything but the proofs of an illegal manifestation, coming from a minority that usurped the right of the majority and violated the Constitution.

But however peremptory the arguments to oppose to the threats of the ex-members, it would have been better to engage in no discussion and to clearly summon the meeting to disperse. The second commissary, M. Barlet, believing that this scene should not be prolonged, spoke at last, and told M. Benoist d'Azy that he was compelled to carry out the orders he had received; that he summoned the meeting to disperse immediately. The officer commanding the detachment, who had entered the apartment with the two commissaries, had received similar instructions; he added his injunction to the commissaries'. But the same method that had so fruitlessly been used with the commissaries was attempted with the military authority. Once more Article 68 and the decree of deposition were read. To this General Oudinot

added the enumeration of his grade and his new authority, and invited the officer in charge of the detachment to obey him. Firm in the application of the military laws, the officer replied that he only knew his chief, that he had received orders to clear the apartment, to have those who refused to leave arrested, and that he repeated his summons to the meeting to disperse. "We'll all go to Mazas sooner than do it," was the cry of fifty of the most turbulent of the Mountain; and they draped themselves in the inviolability of the Assembly. "They'll have to force us," said some; "to drag us from our seats," said others, "they'll have to use violence, we wish them to do so."

At last the two commissaries went up to MM. Benoist d'Azy and Vitet, seated at the table, lightly laid their hands on the latter's shoulders, and invited them to follow. At a sign from the two ex-Vice-Presidents all resistance ceased. The members left their seats, descended the grand staircase of the *mairie*, placed themselves between the two rows of soldiers, and started on their way. The leaders of the meeting, above all the members of the Mountain, were under the impression that they would be taken to Mazas, and asked for nothing better than thus to afford the whole of Paris the spectacle of their resistance. Their disappointment may be imagined when they saw themselves going in the direction of the Quai d'Orsay. And still it must be admitted that this sojourn on the Quai d'Orsay, situated in the centre of the inhabited quarters, was by much preferable to Mazas for those who fostered the secret hope of getting back to their homes before nightfall.

Why had the barracks of the Quai d'Orsay been substituted for Mazas, originally arranged upon as the place of confinement for the members arrested at the 10th arrondissement? Reasons of prudence had induced this change of plan. Close to the *mairie* we had a sufficient number of carriages

waiting to take about fifty of the ex-members to Mazas. Our provision had not extended beyond that, and it would have taken too long to wait for the number of conveyances required for two hundred and eighty people. Seeing that we could not very well put some in coaches and let others go on foot, we had no alternative but to march the whole of the column to its destination on foot. It will be easily understood that to let a similar procession cross the whole of Paris would have been exposing ourselves to complications it was more prudent to avoid. The moment circumstances had compelled us to give up the idea of partial arrests Mazas became impossible, and the barracks of the Quai d'Orsay was the nearest and most suitable as a temporary place of confinement.

At about two o'clock the column started and left the *mairie* of the 10th arrondissement. General Forey marched at its head with his staff and a company of Vincennes rifles. Then came the representatives between a double row of soldiers of the line. Two more companies closed the procession. The journey offered no incident worthy of notice. The spectators showed the most complete indifference. At three o'clock the large gates of the barracks on the Quai d'Orsay swung back on their hinges, and our captives took possession of their temporary lodgings in a sufficiently jolly manner.

Those last echoes of the irritation of the various parties had but a limited effect outside. At the very doors of the meetings of which we have spoken the Prince reviewed the troops. At the head of a numerous staff he crossed the Place de la Concorde, the Tuileries gardens, the Pont Royal, and the Quai d'Orsay. The reception was most enthusiastic on the part of the army. The cries of "Vive Napoléon! Vive l'Empereur!" might have been heard in the very rooms where the obstinate members of the dissolved Assembly were holding

their sittings, and have supplied the hint to submit. Prince Jérôme, the brother of Napoleon I., had kept his word. Notwithstanding his being still very ill, he had repaired to the Elysée, and went through the review by the side of his nephew; it was like an apparition of the first Empire greeting the advent of the new Empire at its dawn. Behind the old King of Westphalia came Generals Count de Flahaut, Count Roguet, de Bourjoly, Excelmans; then the pleiad of young officers belonging to the military household of the Prince, who under various aspects had shown themselves his useful and devoted auxiliaries, Fleury, Edgard Ney, Marquis de Toulangeon, Count de Menneval, Baron Lepie, &c.

One man especially amongst this brilliant suite, Colonel Fleury, must have felt great joy mixed with pardonable pride. He might have said to himself, "This army is my work." In fact for more than a year, since it had become patent that the conflict between the two great powers could only be solved by an appeal to force, the Prince had been compelled to gather around him an army devoted to his cause. Colonel Fleury had served in Africa; the fame of his bravery as much as the charm of his intellect had created a good many affectionate and intimate relations between himself and the generals and superior officers of the army. Endowed with rare penetration, he knew every one's weak and strong side. He knew to what degree such and such an officer, such and such a regiment could be relied upon; one might say that, thanks to his recollections of Africa, he had chosen one by one almost the whole of the generals of the army of Paris. The most important of his selections was assuredly that of General de Saint-Arnaud. It was, in fact, the young colonel who, at his own suggestion, had been charged by the Prince to go and seek General de Saint-Arnaud in Africa and to ascertain his feelings



with regard to the great events that might eventually take place, and to finally prevail upon him to promise his co-operation. It was also Colonel Fleury who had designated the regiments that garrisoned Paris on the 2nd December; and his choice had been a good one. He had not confined his action to these successive suggestions. He was, as it were, the Minister for War where there was a question of persons. It was to him that among the higher grades in the army the petitions were addressed to obtain advancement or with reference to the garrisoning of Paris. Such requests provided Colonel Fleury with the opportunity of gaining many friends to his Prince. He never neglected one, and he very cleverly kept the sacred fire burning in the heart of those young generals whose fortunes he had befriended. Ministers for War came and went, Colonel Fleury remained. Hence he was the real creator of this army of Paris. This modification in the composition of the army of Paris had been the more necessary, seeing that during the period of his command General Changarnier had succeeded in gaining much sympathetic devotion for himself among the officers. We know to what proofs he wished to expose them; and one cannot blame Louis Napoleon for having profited by his right in order to surround himself also with men disposed to support rather than to betray him. Still the eliminations were not as complete as they should have been; the kind heart of the Prince had been the obstacle. He was prone to believe too easily in the protestations of devotion, especially when coming from a soldier, and it was entirely owing to himself that there still remained in Paris a few regiments at whose heads were chiefs devoted to General Changarnier. After the review of the troops on the Quai d'Orsay, and in consequence of an incident that had scarcely been noticed by any one save the Minister for War, a colonel was placed

on non-activity; but this was one of the rare exceptions which it was but natural to apprehend. Taken as a whole the manifestation that greeted the Prince on his leaving the Elysée was decidedly favourable. The army applauded the accomplished facts, and if among the population there was a pretty equal balance between the cries of "Vive la République" and "Vive Napoléon," there remained also a silent mass from which no hostility was to be feared.

While the dissolved Assembly endeavoured to rally at the *mairie* of the 10th arrondissement, another grave contingency had been revealed to me. The High Court of Justice, in pursuance of Article 118 of the Constitution, had its seat at the Palace of Justice.\* It had waited neither for the decree of deposition and impeachment nor for the invitation of the sham Assembly that at the 10th arrondissement had for a moment usurped a right it had not to assemble. The hurry to meet it had thus displayed, without any previous invitation whatsoever, gave us the measure of its intentions. It was beyond doubt that we had to apprehend the most hostile resolutions on its part.

The danger was naturally foreseen, and accordingly I had taken the necessary measures from an early hour to get to know the intentions of the High Court. Every one of its members was, without knowing it, the object of a special surveillance; but their number was so limited that little hope was left of fathoming their designs. Hence we were reduced to draw from the facts as a whole inductions that might at least put us on the scent

\* We have already quoted Article 68 of the Constitution, we will only recall here its provisions relative to the High Court of Justice which, in the event of the dissolution of the Assembly by the President of the Republic, ran as follows: "The judges of the High Court of Justice shall immediately assemble on the penalty of forfeiture; they convoke the jury in the spot designated by them to proceed to the trial of the President and his accomplices. They themselves nominate the magistrates entrusted with the functions of the public ministry (prosecution)."

of their projects. Being informed first of the arrival of one of the members of the High Court at the Palace of Justice, then of the arrival of a second, then at a few minutes' interval of the successive arrival of all the members, I was bound to conclude that the High Court intended to hold a sitting. Hesitation would be fatal; we must not give this high constitutional tribunal the time to deliberate and to formulate a decision which would not have failed to find its immediate way to the walls of Paris and to be made use of against us. We might at the same time find ourselves confronted by a series of provocations to revolt possessing the semblance of legality, some proceeding from the *mairie* of the 10th arrondissement, others from the High Court.

Determined to break down all obstacles that might compromise our success, I made up my mind to the most energetic measures with regard to the High Court. I summoned one of my commissaries, had a company of the Republican Guard called out to back his authority, and ordered him to proceed immediately to the Palace of Justice and to the audience chamber of the High Court, to suspend the sitting, to seize all the documents, and to arrest if necessary such members as refused to obey his summons. At the same time I handed him a letter, the contents of which I communicated to him, which on entering the court he was to present to the President. He was to be guided by the reply.

A few minutes after leaving my room the commissary entered the audience chamber of the High Court followed by the company of the Republican Guard, which, headed by its drummer, took up a position facing the magistrates. The commissary handed the letter subjoined to the Councillor-President.

*"Paris, 2nd December, 1.45 P.M.*

**"MONSIEUR LE PRÉSIDENT,**

"There is no longer a High Court of Justice. I trust that you will sympathize with the sentiment

that guides me in requesting you to suspend the sitting.

"Please to accept, M. le Président, the assurance of my profound respect.

"The Prefect of Police,  
"DE MAUPAS."

No resistance was attempted. Councillor-President Hardouin immediately declared the sitting closed. Every one of the members left the audience chamber and the Palace. A few moments afterwards the commissary, bringing me the few papers seized on the judges' table, gave an account of his mission. He had met with no resistance nor objection from the members of the High Court; his impression was that those magistrates experienced not the least regret in seeing their task interrupted by the display of physical force.

Indeed, in referring to the terms of Article 68, it will be seen that the members of the High Court were bound, under the present circumstances, to assemble spontaneously "under the penalty of forfeiture." If action had its perils, inaction involved a terrible responsibility. The High Court therefore had acted very prudently in submitting to the Constitution, but it was certain—and thus far the impression of the commissary was correct—that far from blaming the Prefect for the measures he had taken with regard to them, the magistrates, absolved by him from all responsibility, accepted with satisfaction the peaceful solution of the incident.

The news of the dissolution of the High Court and the tidings of the evacuation of the *mairie* of the 10th arrondissement arrived about the same time. There had lain our two greatest perils. The victory over popular uprisings and barricades is easy enough with energetic measures, with sufficient forces, with bayonets and cannon; but in those

supreme moments when trouble prevails everywhere, when the popular mind becomes very susceptible, one cannot possibly foresee the effect produced on it by manifestations of resistance emanating from the great bodies of the State. At such moments so many people seek to know which is the stronger side so as to rally to it, that, in order to gain them over, to increase as much as possible the number of adherents, one must break down everything that breeds doubt; in short, the display of one's force must be made as conclusive as possible. It was on this conviction that I had shaped my conduct.

What guidance could the undecided spectator, still seeking the path to follow, derive from the march of events? What was our situation, what that of our adversaries? Let us sum up in a few words the reply to this double question.

Our principal adversaries, the possible leaders of an uprising, of a diversion of the army, were at Mazas, and very efficiently guarded. The Palace of the Assembly was occupied by our troops, the most hostile representatives were in our power. The High Court of Justice had been dissolved; the attempts to reassemble had been immediately frustrated. The army showed itself too firm to be shaken, its chiefs showed a significant enthusiasm. Such was our balance sheet. Everything was in our favour.

What on the other hand could our adversaries show? Their meetings of ex-members dispersed at M. Barrot's, at M. Crémieux's, at M. Yvan's, at Count Daru's, at the hall of the Pyramides, at the hall Martel, at the *mairie* of the 10th—in short, miscarriage of all their attempts at resistance—such was the result of their first day. The chances were no longer equal.

But it is true we were only at the beginning, and if everything up till now was calculated to inspire us with confidence, it would have been rash



indeed to be betrayed into false security. In presence of an enemy still standing, openly preparing to give us battle, we were bound to maintain and follow up our advantages until he had visibly abdicated and laid down his arms.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

### FIRST GATHERINGS.

M. de Morny tries to form a Ministry.—My Envoy to the Elysée.—The Ministry he brings back from it.—The Girardin Incident.—Paris from 11 A.M. to 11 P.M.—First Barricades.—The Insurgents want to ring the Tocsin.—Germs of Dissent between the Prefecture of Police and the Military Authorities.

IF to the Prince, to General de Saint-Arnaud and to myself the success hoped for from the beginning was henceforth certain, provided we persevered in our energetic measures, our confidence was by no means completely shared by the political men on whom we had relied to form a Cabinet on the morning of the 2nd December. While General de Saint-Arnaud and I were engaged in a hand-to-hand struggle with the complications of which I gave a summary above, M. de Morny tried to constitute a Ministry. This Ministry failed to make its appearance. Since the morning several reports had told me of the surprise expressed by the people at not seeing the composition of the new Ministry placarded by the side of the proclamations. People supposed that this could only be a delay of a few hours, nevertheless it was expected with some impatience. At midday my agents informed me that this delay had led to evil-tongued comments. At two o'clock,

being as far advanced as ever, I sent M. de Morny the following telegraphic message:—

“Prefect of Police to Minister of the Interior.

“2nd December, 2.10 P.M.

“How is it that the composition of the Cabinet is not posted up as yet? “DE MAUPAS.”

I received the following answer:—

“Minister of the Interior to Prefect of Police.

“2.20 P.M.

“It is not composed yet; the moment it is we shall post it up. “DE MORNÏ.”

My agents still more persistently calling my attention to the bad impression produced by the absence of a Ministry, I addressed another message to M. de Morny telling him to hurry the matter:—

“Prefect of Police to Minister of the Interior.

“2nd December, 3.5 P.M.

“We must have a Ministry, even if not complete—we *must*. “DE MAUPAS.”

To this message I received the following answer:

“Minister of the Interior to Prefect of Police.

“2nd December, 3.10 P.M.

“The Minister is occupied with it. The Ministry will probably be complete to-night.

“DE MORNÏ.”

This last message seemed to indicate that there were still difficulties in the way, rather than to promise a solution. I thought the best thing to do was to send direct to the Elysée to urge on the matter. I had with me a capable and intelligent young officer, who at present occupies a very high position in the army. I entrusted him with the mission of calling upon the Prince and of impressing upon him the urgent necessity of an immediate composition of a Ministry, of setting the public mind at rest, of inspiring confidence, and of

cutting short the lamentable comments that floated about with reference to this delay. I recommended my young envoy the most respectful but greatest persistency, and to bring me back a Ministry the composition of which I was authorised to announce immediately. In that way it might have been known at night. But after having waited a long while my envoy came back without a definite answer. "The Ministry is being got together, I shall send its composition before night to the Prefect of Police," the Prince had said. Night time came, and receiving no communication from the Elysée, I sent a second time. Nothing was definitely settled; the future Ministers had given their adhesion separately; but they were to meet once more before the publication of their names in the *Moniteur*. This after all was but a formality, and therefore the Prince hesitated no longer to communicate the names to me. At nine o'clock my young envoy brought me the list. It had been written in his presence by the Prince himself. I received at the same time an order to have the composition of the Ministry printed and placarded. It was printed during the night, and at daybreak the following announcement was on every wall in Paris.

"PREFECTURE OF POLICE,  
"PARIS, 3rd December, 1851.

"Composition of the Ministry.

- "MM. COUNT DE MORNAY, Interior;  
FOULD, Finances;  
ROUHER, Justice;  
MAGNE, Public Works;  
GENERAL DE SAINT-ARNAUD, War;  
DUCOS, Marine;  
MARQUIS DE TURGOT, Foreign Affairs;  
MM. LEFÈVRE DURUFLÉ, Commerce;  
FOURTOUL, Public Education.

"Certified as correct,

"The Prefect of Police, DE MAUPAS."

At the Ministry of the Interior during this eventful day, the greater part of the time had been spent in negotiations necessary to the formation of a Ministry, and the drawing up of a circular to the prefects. The Minister acquainted them with what had occurred, and asked them for an energetic co-operation.

M. de Morny had many friends in Paris, especially among men of business and journalists. Part of his day had been taken up with their reception, and now and again they gave him some belated or interested information which was not of a nature to inspire him very usefully. It was probably some rival of M. de Girardin who was alarmed by the doings of the latter, and made M. de Morny write the dispatch which we quote below, if only to show how much value could be attached to the fictitious dispatches published by a certain personage, supposed to be behind the scenes—M. Véron.

“Minister of the Interior to Prefect of Police.

“*2nd December, 1.55 P.M.*

“Have M. de Girardin watched very closely. It is said that he has already attempted to incite the troops.

“DE MORNÝ.”

I was perfectly well informed about the attitude of M. de Girardin, which did not seem to me to justify any severe measures. Consequently I had neither answered nor taken any further notice of this dispatch. Nevertheless the question, of small importance assuredly, seemed to worry the Minister of the Interior, and during the evening we exchanged the following messages on the subject.

“Minister of the Interior to Prefect of Police.

“*2nd December, 6.10 P.M.*

“The Minister begs to call the Prefect’s attention to M. Emile de Girardin, and requests that he may be arrested at the first opportunity.

“DE MORNÝ.”

"Prefect of Police to Minister of the Interior.

"2nd December, 6.15 P.M

"Is it wise to resort to this measure?

"DE MAUPAS."

"Minister of the Interior to Prefect of Police.

"2nd December, 6.25 P.M

"If he is hostile, it's no use to hesitate.

"DE MORNAY."

In fact I did not hesitate; I left M. de Girardin at large. His arrest at that moment would have been a superfluous piece of severity, and we were obliged to be severe enough, where it was absolutely necessary, not to engage in fancy measures. Consequently I confined myself to have M. de Girardin watched as heretofore, and that was all.

While on the subject of M. de Girardin let us note that M. Véron, who mentions the incident in his "*Mémoires d'un Bourgeois de Paris*," translates the despatches we have just given in the following fashion :—

"The Minister of the Interior to Prefect of Police.

"The Minister has grave reasons not to have M. Emile de Girardin molested.

"DE MORNAY."

It is scarcely possible to travesty the truth with more unconcern. However, when people once start inventing they are not particular as to the exact limits, and this *Bourgeois de Paris* set himself none in his novel. We have given an exact statement of the situation. The truth with regard to it was not known as yet during the day of the 2nd December by the Paris population. Attempts at resistance on the part of the ex-members and wholesale arrests were vaguely spoken of, but nothing was clearly specified in those rumours. The sole act of lawful resistance about which doubt was no longer possible was the decision of the



High Court of Justice. Written copies of it were circulated, which read as follows :—

“Decision of the High Court of Justice.

“By virtue of Article 68 of the Constitution the High Court of Justice declares Louis Napoleon charged with the crime of high treason.

“And convokes the national jury to proceed without delay to his judgment. M. Councillor Renouard is entrusted with the duty of the prosecution before the High Court.

“Given in Paris the 2nd December, 1851.

“HARDOUIN, *President*.

“DELAPLACE, PATAILLE, MOREAU (de la Seine),  
GAUCHY, QUESNAULT, *Judges*.”

This decree was written in the form of a placard ; and it was intended to post it on the walls of Paris during the night of the 2nd-3rd December.

In the state of comparative uncertainty in which the mass of the population found themselves they held back. We have already alluded to the satisfactory aspect of Paris during the morning. Less favourable symptoms revealed themselves as the day wore on. It became certain that a storm was brewing, for one might detect its ordinary precursors.

Towards eleven o'clock the crowds became very dense ; their attitude, save a few exceptions, was no longer sympathetic. Several men among them began to show their hostility. There was a good deal of speechifying, and, of course, it all counselled revolt. In the quarters where the demagogic element prevailed the workmen were leaving off work. At two o'clock several crowds were dispersed by the police in the 7th arrondissement.

At a quarter-past two a band of about a hundred came marching along the Rue St. Antoine singing the *Marseillaise*. Coming out on the Boulevard

Beaumarchais they came upon a squad of police, and dispersed without resistance.

At half-past four there was a mass movement towards the open space in the Rue St. Martin (now the Square des Arts et Métiers), the Rue du Temple, the Portes St. Denis and St. Martin.

At seven o'clock cries of "Down with the traitors! Down with Louis Napoleon! Vive la République!" were heard, and several people were arrested on the boulevards. A little later about twelve hundred forbidding-looking figures came down the Rue St. Martin singing the *Marseillaise* and uttering threats of violence. A similar manifestation took place in the Rue Chapon and in the Rue du Temple, only instead of the *Marseillaise* the *Chant du Départ* was intoned. But the refrain to those quasi-patriotic hymns was the same everywhere: "Down with the dictator! Down with the traitors! and Vive la République!" was bellowed rather than shouted.

What meant those noisy processions, threatening no doubt, but by no means aggressive? It was easy enough to fathom their aim. They wanted to give Paris a revolutionary aspect; they hoped by marching along like this through the populous quarters to make the workmen shake off their indifference, to imbue them with an ardour absent up till now. Nothing in the stage arrangement to this effect had been neglected, and behind the braying columns which excited curiosity, if not interest, came the street orators stumping the groups the tumult had brought together, and explaining to them that the moment had come to take up arms. There was no attempt at secrecy; the rendezvous was fixed for next morning, 3rd December, at seven o'clock, on the Place de la Bastille.

At nine o'clock in the evening hostile gatherings began to take place in the better quarters. On the Boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle the police were compelled to disperse several very threatening groups;

a great many arrests were made, and not a few of those arrested had arms upon them.

At ten o'clock on the Boulevard des Italiens, distinguished as a rule for elegant rather than riotous propensities, a group of intoxicated individuals sang the *Marseillaise* and called upon the people to take up arms. In the Rue du Sentier aggression commenced, and the police had great trouble in getting a non-commissioned officer of gendarmerie out of the insurgents' hands.

Finally, between half-past ten and eleven, things looked very threatening, but principally between the Hôtel de Ville and the Bastille. Near the Porte St. Martin a regiment was hissed as it passed. Recourse to force became necessary, as at every moment one might expect barricades to be thrown up. But the signal to begin had not as yet been given; the insurgents did not feel themselves sufficiently numerous. Night was counted on to stimulate the indifferent, and to congregate a force that would allow of the commencing of the struggle.

Strong pickets patrolled the boulevards and easily got the better of some belated groups. The great arteries became free and deserted; the narrow and dark back streets where no troops were sent remained the sole refuge of the rioters, who wanted to take advantage of the night to prepare the combat for the next day.

From midnight to two o'clock in the morning we were informed of barricades being begun in the St. Martin and St. Denis quarters. I had also learned that the insurgents meant to move upon the churches to sound the tocsin. The tocsin always produces a terrible impression upon the multitude. The dirge-like revelation of a great calamity has preserved its traditional prestige, and it was imperative not to arouse this great emotion among the inhabitants of Paris, in the interests both of religion and of public tranquillity. The profanation of our sanctuaries should be prevented

at all risks. Where would the bandits have stopped when once masters of our churches? The spots devoted to prayer and concord must not supply the signal for civil war and all its scourges. I had not the least doubt that the ecclesiastical authorities would willingly lend themselves to my measures; so on receiving the news of our enemies' plans I wrote to my excellent and venerable friend, Monseigneur Sibour, Archbishop of Paris.

"PARIS, 2nd December, 1851.

"MONSEIGNEUR,"

"One common feeling animates us, the wish to save the country. The Socialists intend to get possession of your churches and to sound the tocsin. Allow me to place sufficient forces in the bell-towers to have both religion and public tranquillity respected.

Pray accept, Monseigneur, the expressions of my profound respect and affectionate devotion.

"The Prefect of Police,

"DE MAUPAS."

Our respected Archbishop eagerly accepted my offer. The threatened churches were either occupied or watched, and the ropes of the bells cut. It was time to act, for in the St. Martin quarter the insurgents had been beforehand with our agents at the door of one church. Luckily the door had resisted their first onslaught; they took to their heels at the approach of the public force, and the calamity to be apprehended was averted. As for the secret societies they actively continued their work. The ex-members who were still at large equally concerted with each other. The various conferences were sitting *en permanence*. Recruits were sought in their own homes; arms, ammunition, and above all money, were distributed lavishly. Along the whole line the watchword rang, "The call to arms is for to-morrow."

We were ready to fight, and resolved to conquer,

but to the satisfaction of victory I by much preferred the moral triumph of making the battle impossible. All my efforts tended that way; my agents pursued the same aim with the most praiseworthy ardour. It is this same conviction that I wished to impress upon the army of Paris, or rather upon its chiefs. In this, however, I did not completely succeed. Between the military authorities and myself there existed a divergence of opinion with regard to the manner in which we were to operate in the streets. Later we shall see the breach widen; but even at that moment it began to show itself.

I said to General Magnan, "Have the city patrolled throughout and keep sufficient forces on foot during the night to show our enemies their complete impotency. Take away their appetite even to begin the fight." To which the commander-in-chief of the army of Paris replied, "I have shown sufficient strength to-day to inspire them with a wholesome fear. I want to rest my men. I will get them to their barracks. If to-morrow we come upon some barricades, we will teach them a lesson they will not forget in a hurry."

The subjoined message had been inspired by the same feeling which thoroughly possessed my mind. I wished to prevent in order not to have to repress.

"Prefect of Police to General Magnan.

*"2nd December 10.45 P.M.*

"There is a middle course between keeping the whole of the garrison on foot, and not leaving a soldier in the streets. I am afraid, my dear general, that the patrols only will not suffice. Why are not you seated in my arm-chair?—you would be of my opinion in about five minutes.

"Show the imposing forces we dispose of, if it be only for a moment, and in a promenade from one end of the boulevards to the other. Our game



stands too well to compromise it. To increase the obstacles for want of the simplest measure that might break them down would be doing this.

“Allow me to tell you that no one in Paris knows better than the Prefect of Police what is going on.

“I pray you, show some troops on the boulevards.

“Very faithfully yours,

“DE MAUPAS.”

We had sufficient troops. Our calculations had been made to occupy Paris day and night, while still imposing no more than eight hours' duty on the regiments engaged. Without, therefore, fatiguing the army, my request might have been complied with; and I maintain that if my system had been adopted not to let the rioters remove a paving-stone or overthrow a vehicle whatsoever in any part of Paris, the days of the 3rd and 4th December would have passed over like the 2nd. Protests, cries, threats, at the worst a few attempts at throwing up barricades—in one word, a great deal of noise for nothing—would have been the utmost limit of our enemy's rôle. It is to this that I wanted to reduce it.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE FIRST BARRICADES.

Departure of the ex-Members for Vincennes, Mazas, and Mont Valérien.—Their Reception in the Faubourg St. Antoine.—Death of Baudin.—M. Victor Hugo's Hallucinations.

THE night of the 2nd-3rd December was replete with incidents. The stir at the Prefecture of Police was nearly as great as it had been during the day.

The first and foremost of our difficulties was the ultimate destination of the ex-members, at present under lock and key at the barracks of the Quai d'Orsay. After various communications between the Prince, the Ministers for War and the Interior, and the Prefect of Police, it was decided that the prisoners should be sent in three different directions—Vincennes, Mazas, and the Mont Valérien. Mazas was selected for those whom we meant to keep until further orders. The manner of transport was not without its difficulties; it was not easy to find a sufficient number of carriages to convey nearly two hundred persons—one might say two hundred and fifty, counting the police agents—it being necessary that these carriages should offer some guarantees of safety. We hurriedly secured from the postal authorities the letter-carriers' vans, also some omnibuses from elsewhere; but this was not enough, and we were compelled to add three prison vans, which aroused the indignation of some of our guests at the Quai d'Orsay, especially of the sybarites of the Mountain.

Lamentations like these are somewhat out of place in such moments. War has its fortunes, its hardships even; those who provoked the war should at least put up with them without grumbling. If all our adversaries had confined themselves, as some did at M. Barrot's and M. Daru's, to a dignified and peaceable resistance, to protests, however energetic, we were resolved, and we proved it, to treat them with the utmost consideration. But after what had occurred at the *mairie* of the 10th arrondissement, after the violence indulged by this semblance of an Assembly, after the decrees of deposition and impeachment placarded on the walls of Paris, we were unmistakably at war, and they should have shown themselves resigned to some of its rigours.

Half an hour after midnight the first convoy started for Mont Valérien. It consisted of about

fifty ex-members. At three o'clock sixty more were dispatched to Mazas. At half-past five in the morning only, the last conveyances went on their way to Vincennes, and passed along the Faubourg St. Antoine just about the time when the first groups of workmen in quest of news made their appearance in the streets.

We ourselves should have some compunction to narrate in this place the unfavourable reception accorded to the ex-members when they were recognised. Happily it is M. Odilon Barrot himself, an actor in the scene, who will give us a faithful account of it.

"When we passed through the Faubourg St. Antoine," says M. Odilon Barrot in his "*Mémoires*,"\* the workmen were beginning to go to their work. They inquired of each other who were in those carriages so well escorted. 'Ah,' they said, after being told who we were, 'they are the five-and-twenty francs whom they are going to put into the jug. . . . Serve them right. . . .' This was all the compassion shown to the elect of universal suffrage by the population of this Faubourg, so famous and so feared on account of its democratic passions." In those significant terms was pronounced the funeral oration of the Assembly, and we can only ask ourselves by what access of sincerity this avowal comes to us from the very man who was exposing, not his life perhaps, but at least his liberty, in the noisy defence of the rights and prerogatives of this fallen power.

Then, as it is to-day, those unfortunate five-and-twenty francs had the power to excite, and not unjustly, the indignation of the people.

General de Courtigis commanded at Vincennes. At ten o'clock at night I wrote to tell him of the arrival next morning of a hundred State prisoners, so that he might get everything in readiness. This

\* "*Mémoires posthumes de M. Odilon Barrot*," vol. iv. p. 231.

first letter only gave summary indications. It read as follows :—

“MY DEAR GENERAL,

“I send you about a hundred prisoners of State; they are the ex-representatives of the people, *who must be treated with the utmost consideration*, and not lost sight of rather than locked up. I beg you will install them in small groups in the rooms you have at your disposal, and if necessary in part of your own apartments. Sentries will be posted at their doors; the greatest vigilance should be exercised.

“Truly yours,

“DE MAUPAS.”

In consequence of this letter frequent communications had been exchanged between me and the general during the night. Thanks to his energy, everything was prepared in a wonderfully short time, and when the carriages arrived the lodgings were ready. At half-past six the doors closed upon our prisoners.

At a quarter to seven I sent the Minister of the Interior the following message :—

“Prefect of Police to Minister of the Interior.

*3rd December, 6.45 A.M.*

“The two hundred and eighteen ex-representatives are, with the exception of a few, at Mont Valérien, Mazas, and Vincennes. I have set some at liberty. The resolutions taken at the 10th arrondissement are in my hands. Have you thought about constituting your council of war? Is there already some disagreement among the Ministry? It would be well to let the people know that it exists by doing something.

“DE MAUPAS.”

Our commissaries and superintendents had, on their side, usefully employed the night. Not a quarter of an hour went by without my receiving

information of the arrest of some socialist, leader of a band, or promoter of a riot; several ex-members were among the number. My agents, especially those who belonged to the secret societies, sent me a great many interesting reports. They mentioned that the night had been calm, but all agreed in announcing a taking to arms on the morning of the 3rd, unless very great precautions paralyzed the intentions of the leaders in time.

I kept the Government informed of the situation. I resumed it in the following dispatch which I addressed to the Elysée, the Ministers for War and the Interior, and General Magnan, respectively.

*"3rd December, 6.10 A.M.*

"The night has been comparatively calm. What will the morning be? The question will be judged between seven and eight o'clock. It is certain that the chiefs of the barricades are at their posts. Will they dare take the offensive?

"Several important members of the Mountain have started for the provinces this night, some from fear, others to carry on the propaganda. We must expect to see the resolutions taken at the 10th arrondissement by the two hundred and eighteen ex-representatives, and the pretended decision (which was not given) of the High Court of Justice, placarded and distributed throughout Paris. We shall take measures to prevent the distribution.

"Throughout the night I have made several important arrests both of ex-members and leaders of societies. I have had entire meetings broken up in which resistance was being prepared and munitions distributed. I have had a quantity of handshells seized which were not filled yet, and of which I will send you a specimen.

*"DE MAUPAS."*

It was evident that the complications we expected on the 3rd were of a nature different from those we had overcome the day before. The 2nd December



we had only been in presence of moral resistance—the supreme effort of the legal institutions that were dead by now, but had tried to survive their downfall. In this effort the Mountain had still part of the Right with it; it was, as it were, its “break,” for it could not maintain this alliance, even momentarily, save at the sacrifice of its bellicose tendencies. This, and this only, was the secret of the adjournment for taking to arms. But on the 3rd December those Mountaineers who remained at large found themselves freed from this restraint, irksome to their ardour, and through them we were to be confronted with the revolt. The invoking of legal means was no longer anything but the shallowest pretext. The avowed aim was now not the restoring of the Constitution, but the triumph of the Revolution. The reward was no longer a regular government, parliamentary, monarchical, or republican, as the case might be. The satisfaction hoped for and promised was plunder and pillage, with the crowning effort of some anarchical government, of which they were very careful not to publish the programme beforehand. We could not have found a better battle-ground; it was the struggle of 1852 anticipated by a few months only. To conquer, it was only necessary to know how to use our forces, but it was imperative not to fall asleep amid a false security, as was done for a moment. Fortunately we were strong enough to be able to allow ourselves some blunders, and we shall soon see that those who committed them knew how to retrieve them valiantly.

In expectation of what was coming to us from the side of the Faubourg St. Antoine, several groups of agents posted themselves at a quarter to seven in the various streets adjacent to the Place de la Bastille. They had orders not to act before the arrival of the troops. They were only to watch the leaders in such a manner as to be able to inform the military authorities on their arrival,

and to enable the latter to act promptly and efficaciously.

True, General Magnan had said, "I shall occupy the Place de la Bastille to-morrow morning, the 3rd December," but the exact hour of this occupation had not been mentioned. I had informed the general that the rioters had appointed to meet at seven o'clock. I expected the troops to take up their position at seven at the latest. At seven no troops. At half-past seven no troops. At eight o'clock no troops. Every report that came to me from the Faubourg St. Antoine denoted an increasing agitation. My men asked for support. At nine o'clock, having received no news as yet of the arrival of the military, I sent the following dispatch to General Magnan.

*"3rd December, 9.10 A.M.*

"All my reports dated between seven and eight this morning tell me that barricades are being thrown up in the Faubourg St. Antoine, and that no troops are to be seen. My agents do not interfere because they have orders to await the arrival of the military. The workmen are coming down in crowds; the game has properly begun. Send troops without a moment's loss. Above all send cannon to Mazas, which is the spot aimed at. I should also like you to send me what I asked you for the Prefecture of Police.\*

"The Prefect of Police,  
"DE MAUPAS."

Scarcely was this dispatch gone when I received the news of the arrival of General Marülaz on the Place de la Bastille. He arrived at the minute mentioned in his instructions, half-past eight. No sooner had he taken up his positions than one of

\* What I had asked for the Prefecture of Police was to give me back the two companies of the 6th Light Infantry and four pieces of cannon that had been taken away without my knowledge. It was my duty to protest against this state of things by claiming the forces strictly necessary to the safety of the City and the Prefecture of Police.

my agents came to tell him that several barricades had been thrown up in the Faubourg St. Antoine. One was situated at the corner of the Rue St. Marguerite and defended by a number of representatives. Another one had been constructed a little farther down. General Marülaz immediately dispatched three companies of the 9th Light Infantry, under Major Pajol, in this direction. He himself supported the movement by a parallel one at the head of a battalion of the 4th of the Line down the Rue de Charonne, so as to debouch on this same barricade by way of the Rue de Cotte.

Arrived at the foot of it at a quarter-past nine, Major Pajol was about to give the order for its attack, when commenced a lamentable scene only too frequent in those unfortunate wars of the streets.

Invested with their insignia of office, and standing on the overthrown vehicles of which the barricade was composed, the ex-members began to harangue the troops. Among the former were Baudin, Esquiros, Malardier, Dulac, and Deflotte. "We represent the law," said the ex-members to the soldiers, "do not fire upon us; we are your brothers, we are your friends, the emissaries of the people."

The major could not allow this attempt to seduce his men to be prolonged; he ordered his column to storm the barricade. At the peril of his life this brave officer had not given the order to fire; a feeling of humanity had prevented him. He hoped to carry the obstacle without bloodshed; but the signal to fire came from the insurgents, and at the first volley a soldier fell, struck dead. The soldiers fired in their turn, and ex-representative Baudin was mortally wounded, as well as some one who seemed to command the rioters.\*

\* Baudin has become the legendary hero of the December revolution. Every now and then a panorama or picture representing his death is exhibited in the populous quarters. He was probably one of the few men prepared to sacrifice their lives to their principles. Not

Until now we have abstained in these pages from pointing out the errors and the calumnies of the pamphlet of M. Victor Hugo entitled "L'Histoire d'un Crime." One cannot help asking how a mind of this calibre could have dared to publish such improbable disguises of the truth. The hope of deceiving the ignorant and the credulous can only explain the boldness of some of the inventions. But where is the man of sense who can read without a smile those thousand and one episodes which would be ridiculous, if they did not pretend to cry the truth from the housetops. Let us cite one of those scenes. The poet no doubt fancied that he was writing some melodrama when he traced the lines we are about to read, and every word of which should be weighed. Let us say first of all which part of his own exploits M. Victor Hugo wished to describe.

At the moment when his friends were fighting on the barricade of the Rue St. Marguerite, M. Victor Hugo was coming in that direction. He crossed the Place de la Bastille, and on his way met with the staff of General Marülaz, composed of the general himself and numerous officers. Two commissaries of police, two superintendents, and twenty police agents escorted this military group, ready to arrest, if necessary, any who by word or deed should attempt to provoke a disturbance.

M. Victor Hugo himself will tell us the discourse he pretends to have addressed to General Marülaz and to those who surrounded him.

"We passed," says M. Victor Hugo, "before the group of men with big epaulets. Those men did

many moments before his last he appealed to a group of workmen. One of them answered: "Do you think we are going to get ourselves killed to secure you your five-and-twenty francs a-day." "Just stay a minute or so," suggested Baudin laconically, "and I'll show you how one dies at the rate of five-and-twenty francs a-day." He kept his word and afforded them the gratification.—*Trans.*

not even pretend to see us—tactics the drift of which we were enabled to understand later on.

“The emotion I experienced the night before, at the sight of the regiment of cuirassiers, took possession of me again.\* To see before me, at a few steps, not laid low, but standing amidst the isolation of a tranquil victory, the assassins of the country, was more than I could bear; I could not contain myself. I tore off my scarf, clutched hold of it by the end, and, leaning my head and arm out of the lowered window of the carriage, I waved it in their faces, shouting, ‘Soldiers, look at this scarf, it is the symbol of the law, it is the National Assembly made manifest. Wherever you see this scarf you behold the law.’

“‘Soldiers, Louis Napoleon kills the Republic. Defend it. Louis Napoleon is a bandit; all his accomplices will follow him to the hulks. To deserve chains is to carry them. Look at the man who is at your head. You take him to be a general? He is a galley slave.’

“The soldiers seemed petrified. Some one who was there (my thanks to this generous, devoted soul) pulled back my arm and whispered, ‘You’ll get yourself shot.’ But I heard not and listened not. I went on always waving the scarf.

“‘You who wear the dress of a general, it is to you I speak, Monsieur. You know who I am. I am a representative of the people, and I know who you are, and I have told you. You are a malefactor. And now do you wish to know my name. Here it is.’ And I shouted my name to him. And I added, ‘And now tell me yours.’ He did not answer. I continued, ‘Be it so; I have no need to

\* M. Victor Hugo alludes to another episode of which he is supposed to have been the hero, as of everything he narrates. According to him he insulted with impunity a regiment of cuirassiers, who would have had the stoical patience to endure without a murmur this avalanche of invectives. This truth of the day before is in keeping with the truth of the day after.



know your name, but I shall know your number when you are at the hulks.'

"The man in the dress of a general drooped his head.

"The others kept silent. Still I understood those looks though they did not glance up. I beheld them drooped, and I felt that they were furious. A profound contempt got possession of me, and I passed on. What was the name of this general? I ignored it then, I ignore it now."

The name of this general we will tell you, M. Victor Hugo; it was General Marulaz.

But M. Victor Hugo must have a poor idea of the intelligence of his readers to fancy that, apart from some poor benighted simpletons, he will succeed in making them believe that a French general would for one moment have supported such imprudent insolence without chastising it.

And those commissaries of police whom he represented elsewhere as striking and insulting every one suspected of the least sympathy with the insurrection, by what miracle were they suddenly bereft of their zeal. What miracle caused them to witness without stirring on the Place de la Bastille what elsewhere would have provoked their immediate severity? We should like M. Victor Hugo to give us the word of this strange enigma, of this contradiction, which he himself shows us without knowing it. We need not wait for the answer of the poet, for the word of the enigma is easy enough to find. Many nights passed over his recollections, and more than one dream had traversed his slumbers. It is one of those dreams he gives us. It is the sole excuse indulgence can advance.

We might borrow a hundred more burlesque scenes of the like authenticity from M. Victor Hugo's pamphlet. The poet's fairy godmother showed herself very generous in her historical

inspirations. Still we do not care to fatigue our readers any longer with them.

In those engagements in the Faubourg St. Antoine the struggle was unequal. The ex-members understood it, and took flight with their convoy of insurgents, inciting the few passers-by they met on their way to take up arms. The troops took possession of the barricade and continued their march along the Faubourg St. Antoine. In less than an hour the traffic was restored, not one of the representatives who appeared at the barricade of the Rue St. Marguerite showed himself. They had prudently taken shelter against the more violent outburst of the storm. Some were snugly ensconced in obscure corners, others with a certain number of armed workmen had locked themselves up in a large court, foiling the search of the military. They waited until the troops had retired to take up their positions of the morning and to reconstruct their barricades, but seeing the military detachments increase and remain stationary, they renounced the contest at that point.

I had dispatched an officer of the Republican Guard to the Faubourg St. Antoine, who after a rapid inspection was to give me an account of the general aspect of the neighbourhood and suggest the measures to be taken. It is from him that I learned the incident of the barricade of the Rue St. Marguerite and the death of Baudin. He informed me at the same time of the agitated state of the Bastille quarter, and of General Marülaz's request for reinforcements. The greater part of his troops had been disposed as attacking columns in the streets of the Faubourg, and the Place de la Bastille was no longer sufficiently guarded. Accordingly I sent General Magnan the following dispatch:—

“Prefect of Police to General Magnan.

“3rd December, 10 A.M.

“The death of an ex-representative on a barricade

is reported to me. It is Baudin, of the Mountain. The news was brought by an officer of the Republican Guard whom I sent to General Marülaz at the Place de la Bastille. The general demands reinforcements at once.

“DE MAUPAS.”

At eleven o'clock General Marülaz received an additional regiment, and he could occupy the Faubourg very efficiently. He immediately took his measures to prevent the rioters from throwing up barricades.

Thus ends this first skirmish of the insurrection; it had strengthened our confidence in the army. The latter, in fact, found itself confronted by the most terrible of perils of civil war, with the attempts at seduction on the part of the chiefs of the insurgents. Officers and soldiers had remained deaf to the exhortations of the representatives of the Mountain, invested as they were with their insignia. No proof could be more conclusive—it was evident that no effort would entice our troops. Whatever complications might arise, our success was henceforth certain.

## CHAPTER XX.

### MINISTERIAL BACKSLIDING.

Fresh Attempts at Insurrection.— Ministerial Backsliding.— Two “Orders.”—Movement on Mazas.—Attempt to carry the Prefecture of Police by surprise.—What the Prefecture really is.—The Insurrection in the Centre of Paris.—General Heibillon makes Short Work of it.—New Attack and Defeat of the Insurgents.—Their Cruelties.—The Barricades of the Evening.—Divergence of Opinion between the Civil and Military Authorities.—Two unpublished Letters of General Magnan.

ONCE the barricades destroyed, the Faubourg St. Antoine was so efficiently occupied by General Marülaz that the insurrection had no chance of rallying or of taking the offensive again.

The ex-members had understood this, and towards mid-day, followed by such insurgents as they had been able to rally, moved in small groups towards the other points of Paris, the Faubourg St. Marceau, the St. Denis quarters, towards Belleville and the Medical University. Once there they endeavoured to make the most of the death of Baudin and to provoke a fresh appeal to arms. We shall soon see that if they did not succeed in obtaining all the hoped-for results, they at least succeeded in organizing a serious insurrection.

The crowds became more dense on the boulevards, on the Place de la Bourse, and above all in the neighbourhoods of the Rues St. Denis, Rambuteau, St. Martin, and du Temple. In these latter quarters the attitude was infinitely more threatening than on the previous night. The groups were fully armed, they only awaited the signal to act.

In those wars of the streets the composition of the combatants is always of two essentially different natures, the leaders and the led. The leaders recruit sometimes by threats, sometimes by the promise of great loot after the victory, a crowd of idlers and the necessitous who engage upon the battle without the least conviction, and who at the smallest incident may desert. The energetic attitude of the Government will always sensibly diminish the latter. Convinced of this, I had in the early morning asked the Minister of the Interior to publish a manifesto, signed by all his colleagues, recommending all peaceable citizens not to join any groups, and announcing the intention of the Government to disperse any and every crowd by force, and to inflict upon the insurgents taken with arms upon them the utmost rigours of the state of siege. I received no answer from M. de Morny. The sharing of this responsibility seemed to me so natural that no hesitation about its acceptance entered my mind for a moment. I

supposed that the delay in answering was entirely owing to the drawing up of the manifesto, and perhaps to the printing of the same. Imagine my surprise when, unfolding the *Moniteur*, I found in a note at the head of its columns the melancholy but real explanation of M. de Morny's silence. The note ran thus: "The Ministry is not constituted as yet; its composition will be published in a supplement to the *Moniteur* (by order)."

Hence there was not, or there was no longer, or there had perhaps never been, a Ministry. Or else it had existed only in the faith and in the desire for it of the Prince.

The Ministry of the previous night, composed partially of the men who had urged the *Coup d'État*, and who had been sitting *en permanence* in M. de Morny's private room—this *de facto* Ministry had deserted the official sanctum at the first clouds that according to their opinion overshadowed success. The decrees of the 10th arrondissement, the decision of the High Court, the impeachment of Louis Napoleon and of his accomplices—of his accomplices above all—had terrified two or three Ministers who since the previous evening had seen their names placarded on the walls of Paris. The pusillanimous preventing the Cabinet from being completed, had in that way imposed upon their colleagues, who did not haggle over their support, the reciprocity of a refusal.

What the Ministry, prevented from motives of personal prudence, failed to do, we, General de Saint-Arnaud and I, did. At the first news of the defection of the Cabinet I had sent one of my secretaries to the Minister for War to propose to him the promulgation without delay of an "order," warning the builders and defenders of barricades of the dangers people ran if taken during a state of siege with arms upon them. I equally communicated to the Minister the copy of



the "order" I had sent to be printed, and which I had immediately placarded. It ran as follows:—

"We, the Prefect of Police,

"In virtue of the decree of the 2nd December, which proclaims the state of siege throughout the first military division,

"Order as follows:—

"Art. I. All gatherings are strictly prohibited. They will be immediately dispersed by force.

"Art. II. All seditious cries, all addresses to the public, all placarding of political documents not emanating from a regularly constituted authority, are equally forbidden.

"Art. III. The agents of the public forces will see to the execution of the present regulations.

"Given at the Prefecture of Police, the 3rd December, 1851.

"The Prefect of Police,

"DE MAUPAS."

General de Saint-Arnaud on his part did not delay sending me his "order." I had four thousand copies of it placarded. It was preceded by a proclamation to the inhabitants of Paris. Subjoined is the document:—

#### "INHABITANTS OF PARIS!

"The enemies of order and society have begun the struggle. It is not against the Government or against the elect of the nation that they fight; their aim is pillage and destruction.

"Let all good citizens combine in the name of society and of their threatened homes.

"Remain calm, inhabitants of Paris! No unnecessary idling in the streets; it obstructs the movements of the valiant soldiers who protect you by their bayonets.

"As for me, you will find me unshaken in my resolution to defend you and to maintain order.

"The Minister for War,

"Pursuant to the law on the state of siege,

"Orders :

"Every individual taken in the act of constructing or defending a barricade, or with arms upon him, shall be shot.

"The General of Division,

"Minister for War,

"DE SAINT-ARNAUD."

Accordingly each had remained within the limits of his functions. The Prefecture's task was to disperse the gatherings. When passing from the crowds to the barricades the rôle of the army commenced.

What charges of cruelty have not those two "orders" evoked against us? What, after all, did we do, except to use our efforts to prevent the struggle or at least to make it less intense? This threatening order of General de Saint-Arnaud was scarcely carried out. The wholesale military executions have, as we shall show later on, only existed in the imagination of a few pamphleteers, at the head of whom must be placed the poet, Victor Hugo. On the contrary, as the reports of the agents of the Prefecture would show, a great number of undecided workmen, partly seduced by the leaders of the riots, threw down their arms and went home quietly. Also, on several points where the placards had drawn attention, the idlers and curious understood the warning, and the groups broke up by themselves. It is beyond doubt that those two "orders," so violently incriminated, served to considerably diminish the number of insurgents, and consequently the number of victims.

Mazas was within a short distance of the first barricades carried in the morning by General Marülaz. The insurgents must have been sorely tempted to try to possess themselves of this place of detention, where they were sure of finding both

friends and leaders; the first, among the Mountaineers who were already there in great numbers, the latter among the generals wroth with their confinement, and ready to use their authority and their courage to invest the struggle with the most formidable proportions.

When leaving the Faubourg St. Antoine, which the cannon pointed in all directions rendered untenable to the rioters, a group of them had taken the direction of Mazas. Immediately afterwards gangs of sinister-looking individuals, who only asked for arms to transform themselves into assailants, seemed to spring as it were from the ground in the neighbourhood of the prison. The approaches to it assumed a threatening look, and the temper of the prisoners themselves was far from reassuring. They were constantly being excited by the numerous visitors, who held out hopes of near deliverance and incited them to revolt in the interior to assist the revolt from without. Colonel Thiérion asked for reinforcements, and begged me to intervene with M. de Morny to diminish the number of visiting permits.

From a craving for inopportune popularity the officials at the Interior granted nearly every applicant, who had been refused at the Prefecture of Police, permission to visit the prisoners at Mazas. Those continual comings and goings created embarrassment and peril. It should be said that M. de Morny saw the danger when pointed out to him, and immediately suspended those permissions.

As for the reinforcements, General Marülaz could not give any, seeing that he had asked for some himself. Hence I addressed to General Herbillon, who was at the Hôtel de Ville, the following letter :

“MY DEAR GENERAL,

“Please to detach one or two battalions from your brigade and to direct them immediately on Mazas, which at the present hour is becoming the

point of attack of the insurrection. Mazas has but one company to defend itself.

“Yours cordially,  
“DE MAUPAS.”

At the same time that I forwarded a copy of this letter to Colonel Thiérion I sent him the most categorical instructions in the event of the complications he apprehended.

Two battalions sent by General Herbillon followed close upon my letter and charged the crowds. Thanks to the prompt relief by the military authorities, Mazas was perfectly secure again in a short time.

But Mazas had only been the butt of a prudent attempt on the insurgents' part. They came rather to watch and to second in the event of an internal disturbance than to make an attack which it was justly considered dangerous to try. They were to shift their efforts to those quarters, the narrow and tortuous streets of which formed a series of natural bastions for the assailants.

The plan, for there was a plan, was to attract the troops to the boulevards by pretended strong gatherings, and to profit by the time it would take to disperse the latter to fortify themselves in the quadrilateral formed by the Rue Montmartre, the boulevards, the Rue du Temple, and the quays. From there, unable to attempt anything against the Hôtel de Ville, held by General Herbillon with some of the artillery and very imposing forces, a move would be made upon the Cité, which contains the Prefecture of Police, the Palace of Justice, the *Conciergerie*, and the *Dépôt*.\*

They knew that to place the Cité in a complete state of defence more troops were necessary than could be disposed of at that moment. The keeping of the bridges which gave access to the island necessitate in fact a considerable number of troops.

\* The *Conciergerie* and *Dépôt* are one now, and serve as a place of detention for prisoners not tried.—*Trans.*

The Pont-Neuf is indeed a strategical position of the first order; it is the easy communication between the two banks of the river, and for this reason it should in the event of war be made secure against all attack.

On the morning of the 2nd December, a battalion of the 6th Light Infantry shared with two battalions of the Republican Guard and half a battery of artillery the defence of the Cité and the Pont-Neuf. The position was occupied as it should have been. In the evening the military authorities had, as we have said already, lessened these forces by two companies of the 6th Light Infantry and the half a battery of artillery. Consequently several points became very weak, and a surprise party boldly led might have penetrated into the island. Once there, the insurgents might well fancy that another charge would leave them the masters of the Prefecture of Police. It would have been the luckiest of chances for the insurrection.

People should know what the Prefecture of Police really is in the hour of peril, when the peace of the capital is threatened—they should know the rôle reserved to it, and the importance it assumes. It is a government within a government, and for the time being the nature of its power becomes almost absolute. The call for immediate decision or for instantaneous action, the confidential nature of the documents that compel this action, the secrecy with regard to the aim pursued, all these necessitate the thorough emancipation of a superior direction. Comparative independence takes the place of ordinary discipline, from the force of circumstances and the dictates of reason. Practice creates this situation.

Even in normal times the Prefecture of Police is an immense mechanism. Everything connected with the public safety, the food supply, the sanitation, in one word everything that interests the



moral and material welfare of the public, comes within the final cognizance of this vast administration. But when troubles arise, when public tranquillity is in danger, when insurrection lifts its head, when war covers the streets with gore, then the incessant obligations, the formidable responsibilities increase a thousandfold for the Prefect of Police. A seditious movement is never altogether spontaneous; a cause, or at least a pretext, produces the germ, an understanding somewhere, that is to say a plot, develops it, conspiracy organises and leads it until the day of action. It is this hidden gestation that has to be watched. It is in the office of the Prefect of Police itself that the first glare of the movement that seeks to burst into light shows itself. It is there that one by one the wires of the intrigue are revealed. The various disclosures are heaped side by side, and through them the future may be foretold; the eve foresees the morrow; the Prefecture becomes a storehouse of information.

On one side are the names of the conspirators and those who watch them, their places of residence, the spots where they meet, the plans they hatch, the means they dispose of, the contingencies on which they build their hopes. On the other are the means of repression of which the public power disposes, and the methods it intends to employ. Everything is arranged by rule, and forms a marvellous whole, whence springs on the day it is wanted a light that pierces the very darkness of the conspiracy.

After this the importance attached to the possession of this immense box of secrets by the insurgents will be easily understood. It would prove the means to momentarily extinguish all resistance by depriving it of its direction, to know their enemies, to discover those who watched and betrayed them, to destroy the evidence of the guilt of those who dreaded such evidence.

The plan of the insurgents to surprise the Prefecture of Police was, therefore, so natural that it might have been foreseen without any special indication. The revelations of our agents only tended to confirm our suppositions in that respect. The plan of attack was absolutely settled ; provided, though, that the first results of the struggle rendered it practicable. We were, however, on our guard, and even then prepared to victoriously repulse all aggression, notwithstanding the inopportune retreat of some of our troops and our cannon.

We have already said that the movement was to be continued during this afternoon of the 3rd December by sham gatherings on the boulevards. In fact, towards midday a strong crowd began to collect on the Place de la Bourse. Ex-representative Delbetz was at its head. He harangued the mob, communicated the decrees of the *mairie* of the 10th arrondissement, and proclaimed insurrection to be "the most sacred of duties." The police agents, in spite of their courageous efforts, became powerless to cope with the progress of this gathering. Each arrest was accompanied by a desperate struggle of the insurgents to rescue the prisoner. But, however threatening, this gathering was evidently nothing more than the diversion planned in the general attack. The mob was apparently unarmed ; it kept to insult, shouting provocation and seditious ditties. A simple charge of cavalry would have got the better of it at the outset with far greater effect than the unequal struggle the police agents sustained for two mortal hours.

At last, at about half-past two, some cavalry appeared on the Boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle, whither the gathering of the Place de la Bourse had removed ; but the insurgents did not wait for the charge, they fled helter-skelter in all directions. The frock-coats migrated to other points of the boulevards not as yet occupied by the troops, in order to provoke fresh demonstrations ; the smocks

took the road to the neighbourhood of the Rue St. Martin, where they would meet with the majority of their friends. A certain number of arrests were made, and we notably succeeded in laying hands upon ex-representative Delbetz.

At the self-same hour that the turntails of the Faubourg St. Antoine began their diversion on the Place de la Bourse, a manifestation of a graver nature took place in the neighbourhood of the Medical University. The men of the barricade of the Rue St. Marguerite were likewise its leaders. And there also the police found itself alone in the presence of the mob, and had to sustain the onslaught for more than two hours. Two agents were seriously wounded.

But the neighbourhoods of the Rues St. Denis, St. Martin, and du Temple had been selected for the pitched battle. A great number of barricades had been rapidly constructed. There were some in the Rues Rambuteau, St. Martin, Greneta, Baubourg, Transnonain, du Temple, and in a number of narrow streets adjacent. All those barricades, especially those of the Rues Transnonain and Rambuteau, were very solidly built up; several reached to the first stories, and were defended by individuals thoroughly well armed and possessing the sad experience of insurrectionary warfare.

Confronted by such preparations, the intervention of the police would have been without avail. Hence I had given orders to my agents to fall back upon the Hôtel de Ville, where they would find General Herbillon, who was preparing to attack the insurgents with an imposing force. My agents were charged with guiding the troops through the tortuous labyrinth in which they were about to engage; they were also charged with the arrests once the barricades taken, and with conveying the prisoners to the Prefecture.

At about two o'clock General Herbillon left the

Hôtel de Ville at the head of a column composed of the 9th battalion of Foot Rifles and one piece of artillery. Whilst he moved upon the St. Denis and St. Martin quarters, a parallel movement by way of the Rue du Temple was executed by a battalion of the 6th Light Infantry. In less than an hour all the barricades were taken and their defenders put to flight. But the secret societies and certain workmen's associations had employed the whole of the morning in convoking the rioters. The place of meeting was the Place St. Martin. They were to bring their arms, the pass-word was to be given by the chiefs.

Towards four o'clock the gathering on this point became enormous, and groups of insurgents were incessantly directed to the spots where the revolt proposed to renew the action.

At five o'clock those self-same quarters whence the insurrection had been swept were again and more strongly than before occupied by it. General Herbillon directed his attacking column a second time against them, and at about seven o'clock he was completely and everywhere master of the field. Apparent tranquillity reigned once more in this sorely-tried neighbourhood.

In this fresh attack Colonel Chapuis of the 3rd of the Line had had the heaviest task. He had dislodged the insurgents from the Rue Baubourg and adjacent streets. The firing had been very lively, and to show that the order of the Minister for War was not an empty threat, several insurgents, taken in a hand-to-hand struggle on the barricades themselves, were executed on the spot.

After this one might fancy the day's work virtually over, nevertheless my agents gave notice that the struggle would recommence in the evening.

In fact, at half-past eight the insurrection brought up fresh levies to the self-same ground where it had been defeated, and intrenched itself in a limited radius of which the Rue Aumaire was the centre,

and whence it might operate by skilfully combined strategical points with the quarters of St. Martin, St. Denis, and du Temple. This time, to my pressing appeal to support my unfortunate police agents, who bent beneath the weight of the insurrection, General Magnan opposed a refusal, having his reasons. There remained therefore nothing to aid them but a battalion of mobile gendarmerie, itself powerless to keep its ground against this fresh attempt. Nevertheless the Rue Aumaire had been valiantly attacked by a company of mobile gendarmerie; that the action had been a severe one might be gathered from the dead left on the spot.

The insurgents had indulged in the most revolting acts of barbarity. One of my agents being at midnight in this self-same Rue Aumaire, where the barricades had been rebuilt for the fourth time, witnessed a most revolting spectacle. A group of insurgents were busy placing on the summit of the barricade the severed head of an unfortunate mobile gendarme. A candle was placed in its mouth, and an inscription, which decency forbids us to reproduce, completed this melancholy proof of their ferocity.

From every point reoccupied by the revolt, municipal magistrates, notable inhabitants, commissaries, and superintendents came to reiterate their urgent demands for relief. I the more gladly became the interpreter of their requests with the military authorities, seeing that these quarters were a prey to the most legitimate apprehensions. They were threatened with plunder and arson — fire being once kindled in those narrow streets, one could not without a shudder contemplate the proportions it might assume. The inhabitants clamoured for troops to remove the barricades and to occupy during the night the streets wrested from the revolt.

We must mention here, and we shall have to repeat the observation elsewhere, that already during the



morning of the 3rd December the military authorities had displayed a lamentable parsimoniousness in the supply of troops. It was on their part neither negligence nor hesitation ; it was both the consequence of a system and the result of an imperfect appreciation of the situation. I had as it were to wrest from them one by one the regiments demanded by the commissaries in their conflicts with the crowds or with the revolt. Whole hours were lost in that way, and in such moments one hour well or badly employed determines final success or final defeat.

Why, in fact, warned as the military authorities had been since the previous evening of the intended gatherings on the Place de la Bastille and in the Faubourg St. Antoine, why did they send an insufficient number of troops, compelling General Marülaz to ask for reinforcements the moment he arrived ?

Why was not Mazas, the temporary place of confinement of the arrested generals, of part of the Mountain and of the leaders of the secret societies, guarded from without day and night in a manner such as to deprive the revolt of all temptation to provoke a riot there ?

Why were not the turbulent quarters, the classic soil of the barricade, strongly patrolled and kept in check by artillery ? Why were they not occupied by forces sufficiently numerous to immediately supply the civil authorities with such detachments as they might require ?

Why were the boulevards themselves, those easy promenade grounds for the army, and the neighbourhood of the Medical University, so absolutely deserted on that very morning, that our agents had been compelled to sustain an obstinate struggle by themselves, and only obtained the forces needed to disperse the gatherings with the utmost difficulty ?

Why did not the troops of General Herbillon, after their rapid successes, continue to occupy the neighbourhood of the Rues St. Denis, St. Martin,

and du Temple, the hotbeds of the insurrection, as it were? Why, in fact, were not the forces of General Herbillon, the moment they became insufficient to follow up their advantages, increased, doubled if necessary? What better opportunity could have offered itself to bring up our reserves?

Why had not the contingents been frequently renewed, as had been done on the morning of the 2nd December, in accordance with the previous arrangements? Finally, why did General Magnan obstinately refuse to comply with my urgent demands on this evening of the 3rd December? In his refusals, as in his decisions, the General acted upon a settled system. He had formal instructions. Those instructions had been agreed upon by the Ministers for War and of the Interior, and transmitted to him during the evening of the 3rd.

But my persistency sprang also from a system carefully weighed, though absolutely different from that of the military authorities. Hence between them and the Prefecture of Police there was a divergence of opinion about the best means to employ.

Assuredly we were animated by the same feelings, the desire to be successful, and the conviction that our respective preferences would conduce to that end. Generals de Saint-Arnaud and Magnan argued exclusively from a military point of view. I viewed matters more especially from a political one.

The military authorities judged that the ardour of the insurgents could only be finally extinguished by the infliction of a vigorous lesson. To chastise them with greater surety they preferred a combined action for which the revolt would have gathered all its forces, on which it would stake all its hopes; they wished to crush them with one blow. True, they had consented during the 3rd December to oppose the revolt at its outset, even to follow it in its various isolated engagements. It was a

satisfaction difficult to refuse to the inhabitants of the invaded quarters. But this much conceded, once the vigour and morale of the army clearly demonstrated, the military authorities found themselves more unfettered to apply their own plan.

This plan I condemned, first for this reason: that by leaving the insurrection to develop itself we abandoned to its ravages such quarters as it pleased the rioters to occupy; secondly, because of the difficulty of foreseeing the proportions of an uprising in Paris and the extent of its consequences. To what degree would the population associate itself with the movement? What would be its moral effect upon the soldier? Those are problems the solution of which it will not do to take for granted too rashly. It must be ever highly imprudent to allow a revolt to gather strength and to expose one's self to serious risks when they may be prevented at their birth. I judged, and I had reason to feel very positive about the matter, that in presence of a permanent show of imposing forces the agitators would lose courage and fail to find fresh recruits. That their first attempts—if attempts there were—being paralyzed, confusion would, at all events, enter their camp, and would compel them to admit their impotency, and to relinquish a struggle of which they could see the disproportion and the perils.

I had had occasion in my various confidential discussions with General de Saint-Arnaud to notice the divergence of opinion that existed between us on the manner of action, and above all on the way in which the troops should be engaged in presence of a revolt or of a threatened insurrection in Paris.

In anticipation of the *Coup d'État* we were preparing together we had frequently conversed about the revolutions of 1830 and 1848. Both of us had studied their most instructive episodes with the

idea of gaining some useful hints. Our appreciations were diametrically opposite, and the recollection of our conversations gave me the key to our present dissension.

The General attributed the overthrow of the monarchy in 1830, as in 1848, to the sole reason of the troops having been badly handled. According to his opinion, they had been too prematurely and, above all, too long brought into contact with the people; they had been harassed and fatigued with useless skirmishes, without coming hand-to-hand; weariness had been the principal cause of their defection.

In some respects this criticism was well founded, but it did not modify my opinion, which was this: that the troops had been inefficiently handled I admitted, but in this sense only, that their engagements came too late and were incomplete; that at the first gatherings the action should have been opened at once by cavalry charges, by more energetic means even, if necessary; that no crowds should have been allowed on any point of Paris without being swept away immediately. In this way sedition could not have come to a head, its very germ would have been crushed. The troops vigorously brought up from the beginning would have been neither harassed nor fatigued. The monarchies were defeated because they peaceably allowed the revolt to organize itself before they employed sufficient measures of repression, and when, astounded at its progress and extent, they recognised the necessity for energetic action, it was too late.

"Too late!" Such was the fatal word that in itself summed up the whole criticism of this system of waiting and respite of the two dynasties overthrown by the mob.

To each of us those appreciations had become the rule of conduct, and the logical cause of our dissension.

The opinion of General de Saint-Arnaud, the assertion of the system of military authority, and the explanation of General Magnan's refusal of troops are, in fact, clearly indicated in the report the commander-in-chief of the army of Paris addressed to the Minister for War on the subject of the events of the 2nd December.\*

Speaking of the incidents of the 3rd December, General Magnan expresses himself to this effect:—

“Suspecting that it was the intention of the leaders of the insurrection to tire out the troops by successively carrying the riot into every quarter, I decided to leave them for a little while to themselves, to give them the chance of choosing their own ground, to take up their positions, and to form a serried mass which I might get at and offer battle to. To this effect I withdrew all the small outposts, sent all the troops to their barracks, and waited.”

Two further documents, but unpublished until now, demonstrate more clearly still the method applied by the military authorities. To my urgent solicitations to leave on foot, during the night of the 3rd-4th December, sufficient forces to prevent

\* The document in question is not only the ordinary report which the commander-in-chief of an army addresses to the Minister for War on the morrow of an action which he has led. The Prince-President wished to have a detailed narrative of all that had happened during those December days from a civil as well as military point of view. He knew that the most slanderous reports had been sent from Paris to all the journals of Europe respecting the events that had occurred. He wished to establish the truth and show it openly. To this effect he had asked a circumstantial report from the commander-in-chief of the army of Paris, and requested me to forward a similar one of everything relating to the Prefecture of Police. Those two documents were to be, and in fact were, sent through the intermediary of the Minister for Foreign Affairs to all our embassies. Our ambassadors were thus enabled to deny the mendacious assertions by the aid of which it was sought to pervert public opinion. The report of General Magnan is dated the 9th December, 1851. It figures *in extenso* in the *Moniteur Universel*. Later on we will speak of the report of the Prefect of Police addressed to the Chief of the State.



the rebuilding of the barricades, General Magnan replied as follows:—

“PARIS, 3rd December, 1851.

“MONSIEUR LE PRÉFET DE POLICE,

“I beg to inform you that all the troops of the army of Paris will take up their positions of attack to-morrow, 4th December, at 10 A.M.

“Pray accept, M. le Préfet de Police, the assurance of my profound esteem.

“The General Commander-in-Chief.

“MAGNAN.”

“Note (Holographic).

“I have ordered all the small posts to be abandoned. All my troops go back to their quarters to-night to get rest. I leave Paris to the insurgents; I leave them to construct their barricades. To-morrow, when they are behind them, I will read them a lesson. We must have done with this and restore tranquillity to the capital. To-morrow all the gatherings will be dispersed by force, the barricades knocked down by the artillery . . . .

“MAGNAN.”

Categorical as were the terms of the commander-in-chief's letter, I was bound to remember my mission—to insure by all possible means the safety of the city of Paris. Swayed by this duty, I felt myself bound to still ask General Magnan to reconsider his decision. I wrote to him once more in the most pressing terms; I asked him to leave me at least some pickets to protect those luckless inhabitants of the St. Denis and St. Martin quarters, and to secure them against plunder and arson. I sent him at the same time copies of their urgent requests and of the reports of my commissaries. But, as we have already pointed out, the General was not free to do as he liked; he had his instructions. His fresh reply only confirmed,

and in almost identical terms, his first communication. It reads as follows:—

“PARIS, 3rd December.

“MONSIEUR LE PRÉFET,

“I have just received your letter; it in no way changes my determination. The troops will take up their positions at ten o'clock, not a minute before. I wish to give my soldiers rest, and above all to give the insurrection time to develop itself, if it dare do so. It is the only way to have done with it once for all.

“I wish to be able to crush it and make an end of all those insurrectionary movements; at the same time to restore confidence to the capital.

“Pray accept, &c. . . .

“The General-in-Chief,

“MAGNAN.”

We shall soon see that the next morning, the 4th December, at ten o'clock, the hour at which I had been officially and twice informed that all the troops of the army of Paris would take up their positions of attack, the troops were still kept back in their barracks. We shall see that they continued to remain there for several hours, and that it wanted renewed and most urgent solicitations on my part to bring them out.

It may be asked why, in so grave an emergency, my demands for troops went no farther than the general-in-chief of the army of Paris—why I did not carry the question somewhat higher—why I did not apply directly to the Minister for War, or even to the Chief of the State himself? I can only reply, that on the 2nd December and on the occasion of the delay in the sending of troops to the *mairie* of the 10th arrondissement, it had been agreed between General de Saint-Arnaud and me that all my requisitions and demands for troops should be addressed to General Magnan, who would according to circumstances refer to the

Minister or not. Hence I only conformed to what had been agreed upon. I should add that, apart from this, most of my messages, but especially the most important, were dispatched in four copies—one to the Prince, the three others to the Ministers for War and of the Interior and to the commander-in-chief of the army of Paris respectively. The Government was therefore informed of the conflict going on; it had all the documents of the discussion before it.

The two letters from General Magnan summed up the military system which I condemned, and against which I did not cease to struggle. Which of us was right? I was convinced that the events of the 3rd December might have been prevented, and that as a matter of course the 4th December would have been averted.

Hence it will be perceived that, while pursuing an identical aim, we totally differed on the most efficient methods of attaining it. I still maintain that if my advice had been followed at the right time we should have added to our triumph the consoling satisfaction of having accomplished our task without bloodshed.

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## CHAPTER XXI.

### PREPARING FOR THE INSURRECTION.

The Insurgents' Hopes.—False Rumours and Revolutionary Placards.  
—Orders with regard to the Gatherings.—Voting by Registration.  
—The Objection it meets with.—M. de Morny's Inquiries.—His Instructions.—An Exchange of useless Dispatches.—Domiciliary Calls for Arms, and Pillage of the Houses close to the Barricades.

THE events of the 2nd December had produced such consternation in the revolutionary camp that the night was barely sufficient to revive the drooping courage and to reconstruct a nucleus of active

elements for an insurrection. The dominant fact of this 2nd December had been the resistance of the parliamentarians. We have seen that on the following day, the 3rd December, the instigations of the previous day had borne fruit. It was no longer with the hope of immediate success that the struggle had been engaged in. Its first aim was to animate and to impel the undecided by example. Little by little a far different hope gladdened the vision. A recurrence of the treacheries of 1830 and 1848 was hoped for. From the fact that in certain regiments several officers had remained devoted to the arrested generals, the deceptive consequence was drawn that a few battalions would secede, and that gradually the rest of the army would follow this example. This illusion was held out everywhere as a certainty, and at the same time false rumours of the most improbable nature were spread in a way so simultaneous as to be truly marvellous. Above all, those relating to the attitude of the provinces had succeeded in working up the imagination. The speeches of such leaders of the Mountain as still remained at large, their proclamations, their appeals to arms, their convocation of the hindmost vassals of the secret societies, had also borne fruit, and on the 4th December the insurrection fancied itself in a position to offer battle. Their dreams already showed them laurels of the third day, as in 1830 and 1848.

We will not accompany those prudent firebrands and patrons of the revolt through their nocturnal meetings, though we had among them invisible watchers. The reproduction of their speeches would prove without interest. They were only the eternal repetitions of the street mob orators. It will be sufficient to mention the leading summaries. The placards that gave them covered the walls of Paris at dawn.

The great citizen, Victor Hugo, was to the rioters the writer elect; and it is no doubt to more surely

secure to them the advantage of his literary skill in the drawing up of their pompous proclamations, to avoid aught that might divert his inspiration, that he kept with such great precaution as far as possible from the post of danger. While calling the workmen to arms he was particularly careful not to change his pen for a rifle. The following proclamation is attributed to the great poet:—

“Vive la République !

“Vive la Constitution !

“Vive le suffrage universel !

“Louis Napoleon is a traitor !

“He has violated the Constitution !

“He has placed himself beyond the pale of the law !

“The republican representatives recall to the minds of the people and the army Article 68 and Article 110, conceived as follows :—

“The Constituent Assembly intrusts the defence of the present Constitution and the rights it consecrates to the custody and patriotism of all Frenchmen.

“Henceforth the people are for ever in possession of universal suffrage, they have need of no prince whatever to give it back to them, and will chastise the rebel. Let the people do their duty. The representatives will march at their head.

“Michel de Bourges, Schœlcher, General Laydet, Mathieu de la Drôme, Brives, Brémont, Joigneaux, Chauffour, Cassal, Guillaud, Jules Favre, Victor Hugo, Emmanuel Arago, Madier de Montjau the elder, Mathé, Signart, Rongeat de l’Isère, Viguier, Eugène Sue, Esquiros, Deflotte.

“Esquiros died on the barricade of the Faubourg St. Antoine.”

Esquiros had no more died on the barricade than General Cavaignac had been murdered in prison. Still the latter tidings was in hot haste announced by an ardent republican, a quasi-ocular witness of



the assassination. The same sincerity characterizes all their information.

After this statement came the following, equally remarkable for its ultra-revolutionary eloquence—

“PEOPLE!

“The nephew of the murderer of the First Republic, the man whom in your sincerity you have invested with the supreme magistracy, has committed the crime of high treason.

“People of February who would no longer have a master, it remains with you to inflict upon the new dictator the punishment he deserves.

“By virtue of a decree of the National Assembly Louis Napoleon is outlawed.

“The representatives are tracked, imprisoned, butchered; and savage hirelings, paid with the Cossack's gold, stand ready to pour shot and shell among the children of Paris.\*

“To arms, to the barricades!!! The committees of *The Proscribed* and of *Central Resistance* are at their posts, awaiting the help of their brethren.

“To arms!!! to arms!!! to arms!!! Death to the enemies of the Republic.

“For the central committee of Resistance, for the society of the Proscribed.

“L. M. GUÉRIN, J. CLÉDAT.”

Furthermore might be read the sensation paragraph which its authors knew full well to be absolutely false:—

“INHABITANTS OF PARIS!

“The National Guards and the people of the departments are marching on Paris to help you to seize the traitor Louis Napoleon Bonaparte.

“For the representatives of the people,

“VICTOR HUGO, President.

“SCHÆLCHER, Secretary.”

\* “L'enfant de Paris” does not mean a juvenile only, it is sometimes the highflown, more often the familiar, term for the French cockney.—*Trans.*

Nor was variety wanting; the following oratorical masterpiece was both placarded and distributed by hand.

“TO THE PEOPLE.

“The Constitution is confided to the custody and patriotism of the French citizens.

“Louis Napoleon is placed beyond the pale of the law.

“The state of siege is abolished.

“Universal suffrage is reinstated.

“Vive la République! To arms!

“For the collective Members of the Mountain,  
“The Delegate, VICTOR HUGO.”

Of course the army could not be overlooked in these eloquent appeals to revolt. The following proclamation was addressed to it:—

“TO THE ARMY.

“Soldiers! what are you about to do? You are being misled and deceived.

“Your most illustrious chiefs are in chains, the sovereignty of the nation is shattered to atoms; its embodiment outraged and violated. And will you follow into the path of opprobrium and treason men lost to all honour—a Louis Napoleon, who sullies his great name by the most odious of crimes; a Saint-Arnaud, cheat, forger, six times dismissed from the army for his vices and his scoundrelism? Soldiers, will you turn against the fatherland the arms she has confided to you for her defence? Soldiers, disobedience to-day is the most sacred of duties. Soldiers, unite with the people to save the fatherland and the Republic.

“Down with the usurper.

“Your magistrates, your representatives, your fellow-citizens, your brothers, your mothers, and your sisters will ask you an account of the blood that has been shed.”

Finally the workmen were appealed to, as if the

latter, who live by their day's labour, had to gain aught else from this demagogical saturnalia than the doubtful honour of providing, at the peril of their lives, the stepping stone for the few ambitious men who united them for their own purpose.

To these workmen, whom they did their utmost to deceive, they said :—

“TO THE WORKMEN.

“Citizens and companions !

“The solemn compact is broken. A royalist minority, in concert with Louis Napoleon, violated the Constitution on the 31st May, 1850.

“In spite of the enormity of the outrage, we awaited to obtain its signal reparation, the general election of 1852.

“But yesterday, he who was the President of the Republic has wiped out this solemn date.

“Under the pretext of restoring to the people that which no one can wrest from her, he really aims at placing her under a military dictatorship.

“Citizens and companions !

“Louis Napoleon has placed himself beyond the pale of the law. The majority of the Assembly, this majority who laid hands on universal suffrage, is dissolved.

“Only the minority preserves its legitimate authority. Let us rally round this minority. Let us fly to the deliverance of the republican prisoners ; let us gather to our midst the representatives faithful to universal suffrage, let us make them a rampart of our bodies, let our delegates increase their ranks, and form with them the nucleus of the new National Assembly.

“Then, reunited in the name of the Constitution, inspired by our fundamental dogma, Liberty, Fraternity, Equality, with the popular standard waving over us, we shall easily overcome this new Cæsar and his prætorians.

“CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF CORPORATIONS.

"P.S.—The city of Rheims is in the hands of the people; its delegates to the new National Assembly are starting for Paris surrounded by a patriotic phalanx.

"The proscribed republicans are re-entering our walls to support the popular effort."

The city of Rheims was not in the hands of the people; but one lie more or less did not matter much.

Let us terminate those sorry productions with a sample of poetry that stared at one from every wall.

"CITIZENS, KEEP COURAGE."

"Un peuple ne peut pas sans être en décadence,  
Perdre ses libertés et son indépendance.  
Avec des soldats ivres et des proscriptions,  
On a pu quelquefois effrayer des nations.  
Jamais la tyrannie et d'indignes entraves  
Ne parviendront chez nous à faire des esclaves."

(A people cannot, without being in decadence, lose liberty and independence. With drunken soldiers and proscription nations have sometimes been frightened. But tyranny and ignominious fetters will never succeed in making slaves of us.)

It would require a volume to reproduce all the attempts at eloquence produced by these delirious imaginations, without counting the lies and impostures.

Side by side with those appeals to revolt was the "order" I had had posted up between four and six in the morning; it was a last warning to those misguided people, and at any rate a necessary hint to the indifferent not to increase, at the peril of their lives, the mobs by their presence.

This order read as follows:—

"INHABITANTS OF PARIS!

"Like ourselves, you wish for order and tranquillity, like ourselves you are impatient to have done with this handful of the factions who since yesterday lift the standard of revolt on high.

"Our brave and fearless troops have overthrown and defeated them everywhere.

"The people has remained deaf to their provocations.

"Nevertheless there are some measures which public security compels.

"The state of siege is already decreed.

"The moment has come to apply its rigorous consequences.

"In virtue of the powers it confers upon us,

"We, Prefect of Police,

"Order :

"(Art. 1.) The traffic is suspended for every public and private conveyance. There will be no exception save in favour of those that relate to the food supply of Paris and the transport of material of war.

"All obstructions of pedestrians in the public thoroughfares and the formation of groups will be dispersed by force, *without preliminary summons*.

"Let the peaceful citizens remain at home. There is a serious peril in not complying with the above-named orders.

"Given in Paris, the 4th December, 1851.

"The Prefect of Police,

"DE MAUPAS."

In the early part of the morning the police, wherever it was sufficiently numerous, was mainly occupied with tearing down the seditious placards; but on some points the bills were protected by armed groups, and we had to await the arrival of the troops in order to act. In the quarters where the masses were congregating the placards were read aloud, and each phrase was emphasized by the most significant plaudits.

No means of inciting the mob were neglected. The tide of resistance was visibly rising; it rose the more uninterruptedly from the fact of the military authorities having decided "to abandon Paris until ten o'clock to the insurgents;" the latter could get ready, count their numbers, organize



themselves, and select their positions at their ease. The action of the police itself lost its ordinary efficiency.

Having been unable to modify the resolutions of the military authorities, I was necessarily compelled to shape my conduct on theirs. I say necessarily, insisting upon the significance of the term. In fact, under ordinary circumstances, when a marked dissension on grave questions arises among the members of a government, an understanding often becomes only possible on the condition of one or the other party retiring. The minority withdraws and unity of views is restored by the joining of new colleagues sharing the sentiment of the majority. If this doctrine be the law of parliamentary governments, it should according to logic be applied to those powers which rest within the hands of a limited number, unless circumstances absolutely exceptional create situations to which every will must bend. The critical nature of the events inaugurated on this 3rd December was to an eminent degree one of those cases that impose silence upon the most legitimate susceptibilities. Ought I in the dissension between me and the military authorities to have put an end to the conflict by my resignation? I ought not, and honestly I could not. For more than a month I had accumulated all the elements of this great enterprise, and for prudence' sake trusted to memory only for the greater part of the information necessary to the direction of all things. What could, in taking my place, a successor have done, ignorant as he must have been of the machinations of our enemies, of their secret designs? In such moments the transmission of the functions of a Prefect of Police must be considered as an impossibility; in case of supreme need it could only have been effected at the risk of the gravest prejudice to the Government. I was thoroughly convinced of this. I did not for a moment think

of retiring ; on the contrary, I deemed it my duty to associate myself with the responsibility forced upon me. Besides, I was supported in the comparative sacrifice of my opinion by this consideration, that if my system was greatly preferable to that of the military authorities, the latter by different means would equally lead to success. I also preserved the hope that by my warnings and persistency I should succeed in enlightening such members of the Government as sinned by their excess of quietude, and in converting them to more efficient measures. My intervention under such conditions could only produce a beneficial counter-action.

Granted, as I have already said, that, the troops retiring until ten o'clock in the morning and my agents left to themselves, the latter could not oppose a front to the uprising that invaded the centre of Paris, would it not have been madness to require of them the attack of barricades so solidly built that artillery only could get the better of them ? Would it not have been inhuman to ask of those brave servitors the sacrifice of their lives to no purpose ? Such an effort would have only resulted in giving our enemies the dangerous encouragement of a first success.

My orders were : to proceed to the points where a gathering is reported, to disperse it if possible ; to arrest the leaders if there be a chance of keeping them in custody. In case of insufficient forces wherewith to face such gatherings as are too numerous and provided with arms, to retreat without giving battle, and to simultaneously inform the commander-in-chief of the army of Paris and the Prefect of Police of the points occupied by the revolt. To tear down the seditious placards and to arrest the street orators.

But the zeal of our agents was such that on several points, unable to resign themselves to retreat, they had boldly engaged the struggle. It

was in consequence of this that from the Porte St. Denis, commissary of police Bellanger sent me the subjoined report:—

“PORTE ST. DENIS, 4th December, 10.50 A.M.

“I have just been personally assaulted in trying to disperse a gathering; I want a reinforcement of forty agents. My scarf was torn to pieces, but I am not wounded.

“BELLANGER.”

I received more than fifty reports of a similar nature; but police agents could do no good—troops were wanted; meanwhile the leaders of insurrection had it all their own way.

Among the methods of agitation resorted to by the street orators, the one by which they endeavoured to reap the greatest benefit to their cause was, a critical consideration of the decree of the 2nd December relative to the voting to be adopted with regard to the plébiscite. In fact the decree introduced a considerable modification to the customs of the country. The secret vote by means of the individual voting paper had solely obtained for these many years, under the Republic of 1848, under the government of July, and under the Restoration. It was a tradition with the living generations, and to find the precedents of voting on the register which the Minister of the Interior wished to revive, one had to go back to the beginning of the century.

The new method was this. In every *mairie*, in every regiment for the army, two registers were to be provided, one for the acceptance, one for the non-acceptance of the plébiscite. Those registers were to remain open for eight days, and the electors were called to record, or to have it done for them, in the event of their inability to write, their vote, accompanied by their names and christian names.

In proposing this M. de Morny had been fatally

inspired. The feeling of the country was sufficiently safe to trust to the verdict she would give if left altogether independent. This pression, clumsily transparent, gratuitously hurt public feeling, and even the most moderate of people loudly protested against this exaction of the Government. In the army dissatisfaction prevailed; officers and soldiers alike expressed openly their hurt at the kind of inquisition it was proposed to exercise over their suffrages.

This inopportune decree created a difficulty which assumed very serious proportions. From all parts of Paris the commissaries and agents of the different services informed me of the disastrous effect of the measure. I in my turn made myself the echo of those complaints with the Government by asking for the instant repeal of the decree, and for the return to the secret mode of voting by the individual voting paper. I considered it urgent and necessary. The organizers of mobs and riots had, we repeat, a precious theme for their declamations. By working it well they succeeded in creating a strong current of excitement and in increasing the number of their adherents.

But in addition to this piece of good luck which the agitators had received from the Government itself to serve as a text for their recriminations, how many other means less avowable did they not employ to mislead public opinion? The principal features, however, in those discourses in the open streets were the false rumours to which we alluded above, and which were invented to excite the lukewarm and to give confidence to the timid.

What did not those orators say? A panting individual elbowed his way through the crowd; he came from Rouen, he said, and had seen the garrison fraternise with the people, and get ready to move on Paris in order to back the insurrection. Lyons and Marseilles, shouted another, are in the hands of the insurrection, and the troops

there have proclaimed the deposition of Louis Napoleon. Generals Bedeau, Lamoricière, and Changarnier, said a third, have been set at liberty by some of the insurgents; they are already in the Faubourg St. Antoine, and are being enthusiastically acclaimed by the few isolated posts at which they have presented themselves. They are going to meet the troops; the magical effect of their presence will impel the rest of the army. General Neumayer, it was added, is marching on Paris at the head of twenty thousand men. And the cries, the huzzas, the frenzied shouts with which those cock-and-bull stories were received!

At places where the frock-coats predominated, some words of encouragement were added to these happy tidings, addressed either to the Orleanists or the Legitimists, for the two parties counted some of their forlorn hope among this multitude.

The Orleanists were told that their princes had just landed at Cherbourg, and that the troops had immediately placed themselves under their command.

The Legitimists were treated to a more fascinating tale still. M. de Chambord, they were assured, was at the gates of Paris, he would make his entry within a few hours. To frustrate all attempt at espionage he had donned the uniform of a simple private in the 12th Dragoons.

We may be permitted to show by the way the kind of witticisms with which the tedious hours were beguiled at the Ministry of the Interior. The Minister had under his direct orders only a small number of agents, and even they were not very experienced, and disposed of no efficient means of information. Hence he was only informed about events and the rumours that were current by what the Prefecture of Police told him. I very carefully sent him the substance of all the important news, but this summary information was apparently not



sufficient. Nevertheless I could not, in order to reply to his continual inquiries, sacrifice the time taken up by more urgent necessities, and above all by the incessant instructions to my agents, who succeeded each other in my room. Hours would have been wanted to reply to the questions of the Minister and his subordinates, who often allowed themselves to send me messages in his name without his authority. From time to time I hinted by my replies my wish to be delivered from the too frequent questions and useless recommendations. Once I did so in a manner which appeared to please the Minister of the Interior but very moderately. I judged so from the fact that he gave publicity to one of those messages, endeavouring to invest it with the appearance of a serious communication, when it was more than plainly visible that it had no other aim than to emphasize my weariness of his too multitudinous questions.

The reader will be able to judge from this message, to which we must add the summary of those that preceded it; they as it were supply the explanatory frame, which has been carefully omitted.

On the 4th December between eight and ten in the morning, I received from the Minister of the Interior nine dispatches containing variations of the following texts. "Have you any news?" "What's up?" "Please let me know."

To these messages I replied alternately with one of the following phrases: "Situation unchanged." "Nothing new." "I am watching." In fact there was no appreciable change in the situation. I had summed up all its aspects in a condensed report addressed at six in the morning of this same 4th December to the Elysée, the Ministers for War and the Interior, and General Magnan respectively. Seeing that a fair field and much favour was given to the insurrection, things took their natural course, and the whole of the telegraphic implements at

our disposal would not have sufficed to narrate to the Minister the thousand and one episodes that succeeded each other rapidly; besides, they only offered a secondary interest, and could in no way determine the resolutions to be taken.

At a quarter-past ten I received the following message:—

“Minister of the Interior to Prefect of Police.

“The Minister complains that his questions are being left unanswered; the replies should be given exactly. Is there anything new?”

It is to this tenth message, *not signed*, that, losing all patience, I replied by the dispatch alluded to above, which reproduced one of the false rumours bruited about on the boulevards. Subjoined is the text: “It is rumoured that the 12th Dragoons, which will arrive to-night from St. Germain, counts in its ranks the Count de Chambord. *I scarcely believe in it.*” “*And I do not believe in it at all,*” said more or less wittily, in a dispatch *not signed*, the Minister or one of his subordinates. Is it necessary to say to one who understands the value of words that the “*I scarcely believe in it*” of my message meant absolutely “*I do not believe in it at all*”? I might assuredly have pointed it out to the Minister, but it was hardly the moment for any but serious talk, and I confined myself to profit by the incident in my own way. I was for some hours delivered from the idle questions of the Ministry of the Interior.

The Minister, if he was the author of this last message, was wrong in trying to joke with regard to this false rumour. One of his most constant preoccupations, in fact, was to gainsay the false rumours, even the most improbable, and he never left off asking me to report to him *all the false rumours* that came to my knowledge. The one relating to the Count de Chambord was of a piece with those concerning the arrival of General Neu-

mayer at the head of a mutinous army, the assassination of General Bedeau, and many others on the subject of which I had previously written to him, pointing out the improbability of those inventions, as I had done on the occasion of the dispatch with reference to M. de Chambord. To get an idea of the persistency with which M. de Morny strove to deny the rumours, even the most frivolous, one must refer to the journals of the time inspired by the Minister of the Interior, notably to the *Constitutionnel* of the 4th December.

Added to these reiterated questions was a series of instructions, often missing their mark, relating to incidents already done with. Then came a batch of news, either unexact or a day or so old. This desire to meddle at any cost with the details of an administration of which he had not the faintest knowledge led the Minister of the Interior to inopportune interference with a service that could only gain by being left alone. We will only quote some samples, and give the telegraphic dispatches without any comment.

“Minister of the Interior to Prefect of Police.

“3rd December, 4 P.M.

“I am being told that the funeral of Baudin will be made the occasion of a manifestation from the 3rd legion (National Guard.) The service will take place at the church Bonne-Nouvelle.

“DE MORNY.”

“Prefect of Police to Minister of the Interior.

“3rd December, 4.15 P.M.

“Baudin was buried ever so long ago. We took every precaution to prevent any disturbance. Only a hundred and ten persons were present at the funeral.

“DE MAUPAS.”

With reference to some bodies of which the

insurgents got possession I received the following dispatch:—

“Minister of the Interior to Prefect of Police.

*“4th December.*

“Remove the bodies which at the present moment are lying in the Cité Bergère.

“DE MORNAY.”

“Prefect of Police to Minister of the Interior.

*“4th December.*

“I am afraid the information brought to you is not absolutely exact; the bodies have been removed ever so long ago by my orders.

“DE MAUPAS.”

These dispatches seem not to have been confided by M. de Morny to his historiographers, or at any rate they did not think it convenient to publish them; they would, however, have had the advantage over theirs of being exact and authentic.

It should be said that if among the numerous false rumours thrown as a sop to the credulity of the seditious part of the population there were not many that succeeded in imposing upon them, there were some that were taken for granted. The defection of the army, the relief on its way from the provinces, the support of the National Guard, were hopes fondly indulged.

And, in fact, the attitude of the National Guard on many points was of a nature calculated to encourage those illusions. Several of its officers openly declared in favour of resistance, and used their authority to entice their men. It is true only a small number responded to the appeal, but their presence induced patience; and the intervention of this citizen militia to whom belonged the honour of the overthrow of the two monarchies of 1830 and 1848 was expected at every moment.

To accelerate the taking to arms of the citizen

soldier domiciliary visits were at last resorted to, and in those quarters invaded by the revolt this much was obtained at any rate—those who declined going down into the streets themselves gave up their arms. Many of the National Guards did not even wait to be asked; they themselves took them to the insurgents or had them taken by their wives and children. As in times gone by, and to preserve healthy traditions as it were, they wrote in large characters on their doors "*Arms given up*;" in this way the dwelling was somewhat more safe from pillage than that of the neighbour.

This domiciliary investigation had not been without results, and during this morning of the 4th December the insurgents succeeded in considerably increasing the stock of arms of which they already disposed. In this way each one contributed his stone to the edifice, some by collecting arms, others by working zealously at the barricades. The latter especially had shown an ardour and aptitude worthy of a better cause. In less than two hours a whole quarter was bristling with entrenchments combined with real science. In the principal streets, where the first shock from the troops was expected, the barricades were formidable, and reached as high as the second floors. Their thickness was such as to afford a shelter, for some time at least, from artillery fire, and to require only a few men to effectually check whole regiments. The most important were those on the Boulevards St. Denis and St. Martin, in the Rues du Petit-Carreau, Montorgueil, and Rambuteau. Especially at the corner of the latter street had the defences of the insurrection been constructed with a science wholly military. Four thick barricades were dovetailed as it were and formed a large quadrangle, the houses that commanded them were filled with insurgents, and the windows, carefully loopholed and padded, allowed of firing upon the assailants



without much danger. Similar arrangements obtained at the Rue du Petit-Carreau, which counted no less than six barricades. Then after those principal works came those of second order, occupying the streets adjacent to the great arteries; there were some in the Rues Tiquetonne and des Jeûneurs and in the streets opening into the Rue Montmartre; above all in the centre of the St. Denis and St. Martin quarters, in the Rues Transnonain, Beaubourg, Volta, Aumaire, Greneta, des Gravilliers, at the Cloister St. Merry, in the Rue du Temple, and throughout the whole of the maze that links the latter street to those of St. Martin and St. Denis.

Other positions outside the central quarter had also been fortified by the insurrection. According to the opinion of experts no revolt had ever been so solidly and scientifically prepared. We should recollect, however, that never before had the system of waiting and observation adopted by the military authorities been indulged to such an extent.

For full fifteen hours the public thoroughfares had been left without troops. Even the posts occupied in ordinary times had been abandoned. Assuredly the margin allowed to the revolt was large, and it had amply profited by it. We have already said that for want of armed support our agents had been condemned to comparative inaction. They could only be an embarrassment to the insurgents, they were powerless to become an obstacle.

It is not without impunity that one allows such bandits to breathe freely for a moment. Such moments are to honest people full of anxiety and tribulation. In the streets occupied by the revolutionary dregs every excess had been committed—houses plundered, furniture thrown out of the windows to make barricades with, and peaceable folk maltreated. One of the principal inhabitants

of the quarter, who had resisted the spoliation of his dwelling, was bound alive to the wheel of an omnibus on the top of a barricade which was expected to stand the brunt of the soldiers' fire. For the whole of this invaded quarter those hours had been hours of mourning and terror.

I repeat once more, I wished to avoid this at any cost. Could it have been avoided? The point might have been contested on the 3rd in the evening; it would have with more appearance of reason have been denied on the morning of the 4th when the revolt was at its apogee; but I maintain, nevertheless, that with energetic measures in the early morning of the 3rd we might have, if not prevented, at least reduced to the smallest and most futile attempts, this insurrection which was about to take such formidable proportions.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE FOURTH DECEMBER.

Delays.—Telegraphic Dispatches from the Prefect of Police.—The Army of Paris leaves its Barracks.—The Convergent Movements of the Divisions Carrelet and Levasseur.—March of General de Courtigis.—Tactics of the Insurgents on the Left Bank.—Retreat of the Troops from the Cité.—Attack on the Prefecture of Police.—An Incident of the Struggle.—More Dispatches of the Prefect of Police.—The imaginary Dispatches of MM. Victor Hugo and Véron.—The Troops go back to Barracks.—The new Barricades.—The Conferences of the Night and their Pass-word.—Colonel Fleury's Counsel.—General Rollin's Mission.—Appeasement and Countermand.

WE have arrived at last at the hour when the errors committed by the military authorities were to be valiantly retrieved. Chiefs and soldiers would vie with each other in courage and devotion. The army of order was about to crush the hordes of anarchy.

Still we cannot refrain from showing once more

the exceeding difficulty with which the civil authority obtained the putting in motion of the troops. In accordance with the two letters from General Magnan to the Prefect of Police—letters we quoted in one of the foregoing chapters—the troops would be out and occupy their positions of attack at ten o'clock in the morning.

At ten o'clock not a regiment, not a soldier, had appeared.

At eleven o'clock, at twelve, not a shadow of a troop.

At half-past twelve I sent the following dispatch :

"Prefect of Police to President of the Republic, Minister for War, Minister of the Interior, and General Magnan.

*"4th December, 12.30 P.M.*

"The barricades increase visibly, the insurrection has not made such a show of strength as yet as it does at this moment. The insurgents are masters of the Porte St. Denis, the Rue Greneta, the Square of St. Martin, and the adjacent points. A barricade on the boulevards reaches to the second stories. The hour for repression has struck. There are no troops, or what there is is insufficient.

"I am almost certain that a plan of attack on the Prefecture of Police will be attempted to night. The efforts of the insurrection will tend in that direction. *We are ready, resolved, and firm.\**

"The barricades are gaining ground, they have almost reached the Montorgueil.

"DE MAUPAS."

It was only at half-past one that the army of

\* In his "Histoire d'un Crime," M. Victor Hugo reveals to us the store set by the insurgents on this attack of the Prefecture of Police. With reference to a pretended decree of the permanent committee of the revolt he expresses himself thus: "Representative Duputz received a few hours later from our hands a copy of the decree, with instructions to take it himself to the Conciergerie the moment the attempt we meditated on the Prefecture of Police and the Hôtel de Ville had succeeded. Unfortunately the attempt miscarried."

Paris left its barracks, and at two that it began the attack. But if the period of waiting had been long, the deployment of this valiant body afforded an admirable spectacle. Its bearing, discipline, and steadiness were excellent. Firm generals to command, stout officers to take it into battle. And we cannot help insisting—for our dissensions altered neither our affection nor our esteem—upon the value of the two chiefs this army boasted in Generals de Saint-Arnaud and Magnan. Their courage and military skill were known to every soldier. Every one knew that they would not retreat an inch, that there would be no compromise; no one feared, as in 1830 and 1848, to be discountenanced in his effort, to be abandoned in the struggle, to be given up to the outrage of those he had come to combat. The army went into the fire with confidence. Scarcely was the head of the column in view of the barricade which occupied the whole width of the boulevard between the Gymnase and the Porte St. Denis than a terrific fire was opened on the troops, and especially on General Carrelet himself, who led in person. His orderly fell by his side, and two men close to him were mortally wounded. But the brave leader stood the fire of the insurgents without flinching, and continued to encourage his men by word and gesture. After a well-sustained musketry fire our soldiers swung into the “double-quick,” and tried to take the barricade at the point of the bayonet, but the work was found too hot, and the artillery had to be got into position.

It was only after being battered for a long while that the infantry renewed its onslaught on this first barricade. They managed to take it, and the insurgents fell back in good order behind the other barricades of the Boulevards St. Denis and St. Martin and behind that of the Rue St. Denis itself, all three of which had been constructed as a shelter and as a second line of defence.

This barricade of the Rue St. Denis was still more solidly constructed than the one on the boulevard that had been taken. After the first exchange of several volleys it was seen that an attempt to storm it would not only be murderous work, but would lead to nothing; once more the artillery was brought up, and a fire from four pieces did some heavy damage. The defence was exceedingly tenacious, but at a given moment the infantry was brought up, and the 72nd of the Line sent against it.

Colonel Quilico would allow none of his officers the privilege of leading. He put himself at the head of his column of attack. At the first volley and at the foot of the barricade itself he fell seriously wounded at the very moment when about to scale it. His lieutenant-colonel made a desperate rush with his men to avenge his chief. He also was struck down; he fell dead by the side of the valiant General de Cotte, just as the latter had his horse killed under him. Such examples from the chiefs could not fail to inspire the men. Amid a very hailstorm of shot the 72nd threw itself against the barricade and succeeded at last in dislodging the insurgents, who fell back once more on their fortified positions a little lower down the same Rue St. Denis and the adjacent thoroughfares.

Meanwhile General Canrobert at the head of his brigade attacked the barricades in the neighbourhood of the Rue St. Martin; he met with the same obstinate resistance from the insurgents, but he also found the same impulse amongst his men, to whom, as usual, he gave the noblest example. All the obstacles there were carried by the bayonet.

General Bourgon also had had some tough engagements, first of all to get into the Rue du Temple, afterwards in the street itself, the line of which he was to follow until he fell across the Rue Rambuteau.

The movement of the Carrelet division was sup-



ported by a strong cavalry column under General Reybell; it was flanked by several batteries of artillery and kept straight down the boulevards, charging the crowds as it went.

On the Boulevard Montmartre, just against the warehouses of M. Sallandrouze and those of the *Prophète*, some shots had been fired from one or more windows on the troops; the latter fired in their turn, and a regularly sustained musketry fire was the result. It would have been dangerous not to punish severely an aggressive movement that would not have failed to find imitators. The military authorities understood this, and two pieces of artillery opened fire on the house whence the discharge came. Some of the insurgents were killed, and the firing from the windows was put a stop to.

This incident provoked a great deal of noise. Nothing, however, could have been more natural. The troops finding themselves attacked retaliated with the means of defence at hand, and instead of allowing the struggle to be protracted, which would have increased the number of victims on both sides, they made short work of the attack. They not only acted wisely, but in accordance with the most elementary rules of warfare.\*

\* M. de Maupas is right. The incident provoked a great deal of noise. Up till now, however, few voices, even among the staunchest partisans of the Empire and the greatest admirers of the Coup d'État, have been raised to fully exculpate the troops from the charge of having committed a merciless act of butchery, necessitated *perhaps* by the most elementary rules of warfare, but carried too far even then. For except in one instance, it has never been denied that shots were fired from one or more windows on the Boulevard Montmartre. But this solitary evidence is worth a hundred others, especially to Englishmen, seeing that it was tendered by one of their own, Captain William Jesse, an officer in her Majesty's service and an eye-witness of the whole affair. He was not likely to have been swayed by political passions, and he decidedly stigmatised the "fusillade" as gratuitous and unprovoked. I am too far from home to quote his testimony in full, nor do I exactly remember the date of his letter to the *Times*, but it will be found between the 14th and 20th December, 1851. Truth compels this note, even from the translator of M. de Maupas' work.—*Trans.*

General Magnan's plan was to execute a converging movement by means of the Carrelet and Levasseur divisions, and thus to enclose the revolt within an iron circle. It was to obtain this result that at the moment when Generals de Cotte, Canrobert, and Bourgon, of the Carrelet division operated along the boulevards, Generals Dulac, Herbillon, and Marülaz of the Levasseur division took the insurgents in the rear by starting from the Church of St. Eustache and the lower parts of the Rues St. Denis and St. Martin.

At the Church of St. Eustache and the Rue Rambuteau the struggle was terrific. Colonel de Lourmel with the 51st and several battalions of the 19th and 43rd of the Line bore its brunt, though supported by a battery of artillery. There also the resistance was such as to make the attempt to carry the barricades without the aid of artillery a fruitless sacrifice of our soldiers' lives. Hence the barricades were thoroughly battered first by a heavy gun fire, after which the troops, headed by their officers, carried them at the point of the bayonet. In all these encounters, and especially at the Rue Rambuteau, the losses were considerable on both sides.

At the very moment of executing these movements General Levasseur attacked the key of the insurgents' position. He himself headed the first column, General Herbillon led the second, and, not losing touch of each other, they penetrated into the narrow streets of the St. Martin and Temple quarters, carrying the numerous obstacles before them. General Marülaz advanced in a parallel line with them and swept the Rue St. Martin and adjacent streets by means of the artillery in his van, which cut a passage through the numerous entrenchments thrown up by the insurrection.

To complete the whole a skilful movement had been ordered by General Magnan. General de Courtigis left Vincennes with his brigade at the

moment the Carrelet and Levasseur divisions started from their bases of operations. He slowly descended the Faubourg St. Antoine, overthrowing the barricades in his road; he also succeeded in barring the way to a considerable group of fugitives who had abandoned the central position to attempt a fresh stand in the quarters between the Place de la Bastille and the Barrière du Trône.

The plan of the insurgents did not stop at the systematic organisation of resistance in the centre of Paris, it embraced the whole of the capital, its faubourgs and the outskirts. It is thus that at La Chapelle St. Denis (not to be confounded with St. Denis itself) there were a great number of barricades, and that in the Faubourg St. Antoine the insurgents had raised some at the most important points.

On the left bank the pass-word had been given to keep to simple skirmishes, just sufficient to attract and occupy the troops of General Renaud. In this way the insurgents might at a given moment move upon the bridges, affect a junction with their brethren on the right, and possess themselves of the Prefecture of Police, of the Palace of Justice, the Conciergerie, if their approaches were not sufficiently guarded.\* To carry out those instructions numerous bands perambulated the Faubourg St. Marceau. A few shots were fired here and there, but the rioters retreated at the appearance of the troops. At the Place Maubert the attitude was more aggressive, still more so in the Rue Dauphine, and at the *carrefour* Buci,† where a barricade was being thrown up. The resistance, however, was of short duration, and a mild charge of one company got the better of it.

\* According to the plans of the insurgents the assault of the Prefecture of Police was to take place during night. But in the event of favourable circumstances it was to take place sooner. It will be seen shortly that the latter course was decided on.

† A place where four or more streets converge; from the Latin *quadrifurcus*: *quatuor*, four; *furca*, fork.—*Trans.*

It was under cover of those various feints that an important gathering had remained unmolested on the Quai aux Fleurs. It was the one which would move against the Prefecture of Police, the Palace of Justice, and the Conciergerie, by way of the Pont-Neuf and the Place Dauphine, and penetrate on the other side by the courtyard of the Sainte-Chapelle.

The forces protecting the Prefecture of Police at that moment were absolutely insufficient. They had been reduced during the evening of the 2nd, which was then an inopportune measure; but their further reduction during the day of the 4th, on the pretext of the combined operations, was a blunder in every sense. In proportion to the growth of the danger became the reduction of the forces, when it was imperative to increase them.

The Republican Guard was charged with the defence of all the bridges save the Pont-Neuf; hence it had to occupy eight of them. It furthermore supplied the posts on the island of St. Louis and the Cité, among which were those of the Palace of Justice, the Conciergerie, the Rue de Jérusalem, and the courtyard of the Sainte-Chapelle. This frittering into small groups, rendered necessary by the topography of the spot, left, as we have had already occasion to show, but few men to each position. As for the Pont-Neuf, it was originally kept, as we said, by a battalion of the 6th Light Infantry, and by some pieces of artillery properly got into position to sweep both issues. On the evening of the 2nd the cannon and two companies of the 6th Light Infantry were withdrawn; on the 4th, at the moment when the struggle became the sharpest, the authorities took away the remainder of the light infantry, and in this way threw open as wide as they could the entry to the Cité, namely the Pont-Neuf.

What was the reason of this ill-considered measure? It may be explained without being excused.

The 6th Light Infantry formed part of the brigade of General Herbillon, who had his staff at the Hôtel de Ville, and the whole of whose forces were massed on the right bank. It was at the moment of the first threats of barricades in the neighbourhood of the Hôtel de Ville, on the 2nd December, that the General, thinking he would have need of all his troops, withdrew the two companies of light infantry from their positions at the Pont-Neuf. It was at the moment of the decisive movement on the 4th December that the same General, having received orders to bring up the whole of his contingent to the St. Denis and St. Martin quarters, recalled the remainder of his 6th Light Infantry. He had done so without a second thought, supposing that they would be replaced by other troops; but the 6th Light Infantry was not replaced, and for some time the Pont-Neuf remained absolutely undefended.

It was only by diminishing the other posts of the Cité that the guard of the Pont-Neuf could be reconstituted. But in thus reducing the former to their lowest limits, they became more and more insufficient to resist attack on one single point. It is thus that the gathering of the Quai aux Fleurs, skilfully taking advantage of the change of dispositions, made a rush at the Pont St. Michel, forced the passage, and stormed up the Rue de la Barillerie to the principal entrance of the Prefecture of Police.

This sudden invasion by the revolt of the approaches to the Prefecture, and the musketry charges by which it was accompanied, had put the agents and the employés on the alert. Each one had hurriedly snatched up some weapon and stood on the defence as far as the steps, where a small body of police agents had massed themselves.

An incident should be recorded here which was not without its salutary influence on those who witnessed it. One of my employés had received



frequent reports from our agents about the island of the Cité being surrounded by the assailants, and had transmitted those reports to me. Suddenly he rushed into my room in a very excited state. "There is not a moment to lose; we are hemmed in on all points. In less than a quarter of an hour the Prefecture will be taken by storm; there being no troops, we are unable to defend ourselves: you'll be massacred. I bring you the only means of safety that remain—they are the keys to a door by which, under similar circumstances, one of your predecessors escaped with his life. Begin by sending away Mme. De Maupas and her child, your mother, and your young sister. I will give you a safe man to guide and protect them. As for me, I will accompany you to a house where you and yours will be secure until the most violent storm is over."

Assuredly the step had been dictated by a generous feeling, but in the hour of supreme peril only one sentiment should animate a man's heart, that of duty, and this duty in my position was resistance to the last. I declined, as I was bound to do, the offer of my employé. I may be allowed to state here that Mme. de Maupas, my mother, and my sister, who were in a room adjacent to mine, and whom I was compelled to warn of the danger, protested energetically, and refused to separate themselves from me in this critical conjuncture.

But I was determined that no spirit of discouragement should demoralize the staff of the Prefecture at the moment when it wanted all its energy, and this determination imposed a duty upon me.

The news having become sufficiently alarming since the morning, it was evident to me that the employé who had counselled flight obeyed the influence of a scare. His offers to go confirmed my first impressions. I took immediate steps to

replace him, and I wished the reason of so sudden a dismissal to be known.

Several commissaries of police, several superintendents, were at this moment at the Prefecture, some awaiting my orders, others to acquaint me with the incidents that had occurred in their quarters. I had them all called to my room; some heads of the administrative departments had joined them. By a strange coincidence, at the moment I was about to address them, and as a kind of preamble to what I was going to say, a vigorous platoon fire made the windows rattle in their frames. "You see," I said to my subordinates, "the danger draws nigh. I know your courage wants no stimulating, but I wish you to understand that should we be buried beneath the walls, we ought under no circumstances to surrender the post confided to our honour. Only one among you has thought of flight. He has even offered me the insult of indicating the way; that one is no longer worthy of figuring in your ranks, I dismiss him from his situation." Then addressing him whom I intended to be his successor, I added, "You whom I know to be staunch and resolute, take the place of him who wanted to abandon it. To your posts, gentlemen, there is not a moment to lose. Let every one do his duty. The reward for duty and devotion will come later on."

It would be difficult to describe the emotion caused by this incident, unforeseen by all who witnessed it. On leaving me each took up his post of defence.

Scarcely had the last commissary left my room than an unusual commotion was heard on the staircase that leads to the courtyard of the Sainte-Chapelle. Proceeding to it I met in one of the reception rooms the brigadier on duty; he told me that the Rue de la Barillerie was invaded by the mob, that the insurgents were masters of the Rue de Constantine, that they were lying in ambush in the houses, whence they fired on the mobile gen-

darmerie who had fallen back before them, and that in a few moments they would be at my gate.

Opening the window of one of the drawing rooms that looked on the courtyard of the Sainte Chapelle, I beheld the first insurgents enter it.

The surprise had been so rapid that the guard at the foot of my staircase, who were taking their meals at that moment, had scarcely time to rush to their arms; they were just closing up their ranks when they were saluted with a volley from the insurgents. The municipal guards replied, and charging them at the bayonet they drove back their bold assailants. The first who entered the courtyard of the Sainte-Chapelle paid the attempt with his life. I saw him fall at the moment the window from which I was watching was shivered to atoms. In another hour the Cité was free, the Prefecture delivered from all danger, and each one received the commendation due to his behaviour and courage.

While writing those lines my memory naturally reverts to certain publications in which mendacity disputes the palm with ridicule. I began by despising them, thinking myself above such imputations, but circumstances compelled me one day to hand over to the law of my country such journals as had reproduced those pamphlets. The law condemned them. One of the pamphleteers was called M. Véron, the other is, alas! the poet gone astray in politics, M. Victor Hugo.

Who and what M. Véron was is pretty well remembered still in our days. He had acquired a large fortune which was freely spent with a group of familiars, men of pleasure and business. Those were the companions of his predilection, nevertheless he endeavoured to attract some political notabilities. As a matter of course I was bound to keep away from such a set. M. Véron owed me a grudge for having replaced his friend M. Carlier at the Prefecture of Police. To this feeling was added later on another, which especially alienated such

goodwill as there was still left towards me. I had been obliged when at the Ministry to deprive him of the direction of the *Constitutionnel* to confide it to an eminent publicist, the Viscount de la Guéronnière. I had simply performed a duty; but M. Véron swore to be revenged, and he fancied that no more favourable opportunity could present itself than his own version of the 2nd December in a book, poor enough in all conscience, which he entitled, "Les Mémoires d'un Bourgeois de Paris." He spared no slanderous fabrications, and it was as much to vent his spite as to give his publication the attraction of quasi-new disclosures that he manufactured the false, the absolutely false, dispatches with which he garnished his volume. We should add that he was not alone in this honourable business, and that his auxiliaries were certain personages who felt themselves aggrieved by my attitude and firmness. Through them he obtained some genuine dispatches; they had only to be travestied, and nothing was easier to a conscience as elastic as M. Véron's.

While on the subject we may be permitted to give both the authentic and the apocryphal dispatches.

Seeing that the troops told off for the defence of the Cité were taken from me, and that the attack on the Prefecture of Police commenced, it became my duty to obstinately claim the forces necessary to the defence of the important position entrusted to my care. The following dispatches on the subject were exchanged between M. de Morny, General Magnan, and myself.

"Prefect of Police to Minister of the Interior and General Magnan.

"4th December, 1.50 P.M.

"A distressing symptom shows itself along the whole of the line, the frock-coats are helping with the barricades. The National Guards carry their rifles; peaceable folk complain bitterly that the

Government abandons them; you must act, and with cannon.

"We are hemmed in by insurgents; they are firing away within a stone's throw of my door.

"The *mairie* of the 6th arrondissement is taken. Not a moment to lose; send troops. Send a regiment and four pieces of artillery to the Prefecture.

"DE MAUPAS."

This dispatch was followed almost immediately by another.

"Prefect of Police to General Magnan.

"4th December, 2.15 P.M.

"I am afraid that the orders are either badly given or misunderstood; some artillery went back to Vincennes at midday, believing that everything was over, when everything was only beginning at that hour.

"This is the plan of the rebels: to keep the troops engaged at the barricades of the St. Martin quarter, to abandon the latter suddenly, to take the Prefecture by surprise, and to entrench themselves on the island.

"We are surrounded, and fighting is going on at our four corners. My cannon and my troops are taken from me when I am most sorely in need. Is there a misunderstanding somewhere? Send me what I ask you.

"The Faubourgs St. Jacques and St. Marceau are up in arms.

"DE MAUPAS."

"Minister of the Interior to Prefect of Police.

"4th December, 2.50. P.M.

"Have you been attacked?"

"DE MORNAY."

"Prefect of Police to Minister of the Interior.

"4th December, 3 P.M.

"Yes, but the insurgents fled at our first volley; several were killed.

"DE MAUPAS."



It is the dispatches I give here and those I gave before which it has pleased MM. Véron and Victor Hugo to travesty, each according to his own liking. Yet the dispatches of M. Véron and those of M. Victor Hugo referring to the same fact are absolutely different. This would already supply the proof of one or the other version being apocryphal; it will suffice to read them to become convinced that both are fabrications.

Let M. Véron be the first to speak. Here are his pseudo dispatches: "Prefect of Police to Minister of the Interior. Thursday, 4th December. Gatherings on the Pont-Neuf; firing on the Quai aux Fleurs; dense mobs in the neighbourhood of the Prefecture of Police. They are firing through the railings of my gate. What am I to do?" Answer fabricated by M. Véron and attributed to M. de Morny: "Reply by firing through your gate."

M. Victor Hugo allows his invention greater flight. This is his version: "Prefect of Police to Minister of the Interior. Thursday, 4th December. Barricades in the Rue Dauphine; I am hemmed in; tell General Sauboul. I am without troops. I cannot make it out. Maupas."

More dispatches, always of M. Victor Hugo's making: "Prefect of Police to Minister of the Interior. I am hemmed in. What am I to do? Maupas." Reply: "If you are ill go to bed. Morny."

"I shall be taken between crossfires. Maupas." Reply: "Go to bed. Morny."

"I am abandoned. Maupas." Reply: "Go to bed, you d—— fool. Morny."

After these various citations one cannot help asking one's self how the inventors of those false dispatches failed to perceive that they were shooting too wide of the mark by attributing such language to M. de Morny. He is even more slandered than I am hurt by being credited with such gross expressions,

I must repeat that the only genuine and authentic dispatches relating to that particular episode of the action are those I have given. Copies were taken of them by my orders and under my personal supervision.\* In manufacturing theirs MM. Véron and Victor Hugo were guilty of a wicked action. M. Véron indulged his revenge without minding the injury he inflicted upon truth. M. Victor Hugo allowed his imagination to supply there, as elsewhere, the absence of official documents which, it is scarcely necessary to say, never offended his eyes.

A painful spectacle indeed is a like decadence—to behold this splendid intellect, this pen fertile in magnificent creations, this former dignitary of the monarchy, this former peer of France, descend to the level of pamphleteer and to travesty the truth in that way! Sad, indeed! And in this pamphlet, in which everything is imposture and confusion, the poet by dint of vilifying everything and everybody did not even notice that he ended by speaking ill of himself. In publishing his "*Histoire d'un Crime*" M. Victor Hugo's aim was to prove that during the December days he had been the organiser of resistance, the hero of the insurrection. Yet by a strange contradiction he shows us, without wishing it, that in those days of combat his courage went no farther than to ask of others the sacrifice of their lives, while he preciousely kept his own out of all danger. This time it is our turn to put him in the dock and to interrogate him.

When on the 4th December those bands of rioters whom he had called to arms came to attack our

\* The telegraphic service at the Prefecture of Police was organised with special care. It occupied a room adjacent to the private office of the Prefect. When I had to dispatch a message two of my secretaries wrote it from my dictation. When one arrived they also took a double copy of it. Two minutes were taken in that way; one was sent to the archives of the Prefecture, the other remained in the office of the Prefect's service. After which a copy was sent to each destination, and another copy taken for my personal use.

residence, one of the principal seats of the governmental power, why was not M. Victor Hugo at their head? Why was not he at the post of danger, or at the post of honour, as he chose to call it in his new language? What other point of the revolt could be more important to him or offer a more signal peril? No; he himself reveals to us his prudent peregrinations; he went in search of glory by groping about in the obscurity of some dark back shops of the faubourgs. We repeat, instead of boldly marching to the fire, M. Victor Hugo hid himself. He himself tells us: "During the last two days," he says; "we had changed our retreat seventeen times, sometimes moving from one end of Paris to the other." Such an agitation affords not the most convincing proof of this belligerent disposition which the poet-pamphleteer endeavours to parade at each page of his book.

Nevertheless let us listen to the resolute way in which he pledges his personal co-operation to his companions. Addressing himself in the self-same back shop to a workman who, armed to the teeth, comes to inquire the pass-word, he says: "Are you sure of your movement for to-night?"

"We have prepared it and count on it," says the workman.

"In that case," says the illustrious poet once more, "as soon as the first barricade is made I wish to be behind it; come and fetch me."

"Where?"

"Wherever I may be." \*

The reply was vague, consequently M. Victor Hugo is never to be found when they want to offer him the honours of the battle.† We should have been glad to think that this persistency in keeping

\* Victor Hugo, "*Histoire d'un Crime*," vol. i. p. 168.

† The back shop spoken of by M. Victor Hugo, and of which we spoke ourselves, namely, that of Auguste, a wine dealer, situated in the Rue de la Roquette, seems to have played an important part in the steps taken by the illustrious poet to organise the insurrection. M. Victor

at a respectful distance from the barricades was owing to his ignorance of their exact situation, but he was at any rate perfectly aware of this attack on the Prefecture of Police; he had been warned and warned again; he will tell us so himself.

"About nine o'clock," says M. Victor Hugo, "an ex-captain of the 8th legion of the National Guard of 1848, named Jourdan, came to offer us his aid.

"He was a daring fellow, one of those who on the morning of the 24th February, 1848, had executed the bold surprise movement on the Hôtel de Ville. We charged him to repeat it, and to extend it to the Prefecture of Police. He knew how to set about it. He told us that he had but few men, but that he would order them to quietly occupy during the day certain strategical points in houses on the Quais de Gèvres, Lepelletier, and in the Rue de la Cité, and that if, in the event of the struggle increasing in the centre of Paris, the men of the *Coup d'Etat* were compelled to withdraw their troops from the Prefecture of Police and the Hôtel de Ville, the attack would be begun immediately on those two points. Let us say at once that Captain Jourdan kept his promise. Unfortunately, as we learnt on that evening, he began perhaps a little too soon. As he had foreseen, the place of the Hôtel de Ville was almost entirely empty of troops. At a certain moment General Herbillion had been obliged to abandon it with his

Hugo narrates his expedition in the following terms:—"I had some trouble to find the door of Auguste in the Rue de la Roquette again. Nearly all the shops were closed, which made the street very dark. At last I perceived, behind a shop window, a light illuminating a pewter counter. Beyond the counter and behind a partition equally provided with windows and hung with white curtains another light could vaguely be seen, and two or three shadows of men seated at a table. That was the place, and I went in. The door in opening rung a bell. At the sound the door of the glazed partition that divided the front from the back shop opened and Auguste appeared. He recognised me at once and came towards me," &c. M. Victor Hugo's share in the events of December amounts to a few expeditions of this kind and to his presence at some meetings, not involving any danger to himself.

cavalry to take the barricades of the centre in the rear. The attack of the republicans was made at the very instant—firing was opened from the windows of the Quai Lepelletier; but the left of the column was still at the bridge of Arcola; a line of skirmishers had been posted in front of the Hôtel de Ville by a major named Larochette; the 44th changed front and came back, and the attempt miscarried."

In fact, thanks to the energetic resistance the insurgents met with in the very courtyard of the Prefect of Police the attempt failed.

One more word to finish here with M. Victor Hugo. In his "*Histoire d'un Crime*," vol. ii. p. 162, the poet pretends that a reward was offered for his arrest; in order to increase his revolutionary importance he commits a complete error. We were perfectly acquainted with M. Victor Hugo's residence; we might have arrested him a dozen times during the three December days; we had no motive for doing so, and it was with our consent that he was allowed, like M. de Girardin and some other ideologists, to freely continue his agitation. While the insurrection attempted to get possession of the Prefecture of Police, the movement so skilfully combined by General Magnan proceeded. At five o'clock it was completely executed; it had been carried out with as much precision as ability.

The Carrelet and Levasseur divisions had operated their junction, borne down all obstacles, pursued the fugitive insurgents, and restored the circulation. General Renaud had kept his ground on the left bank, and General de Courtigis had made the Faubourg St. Antoine safe against any new invasion.

For more than three hours Paris had heard the uninterrupted thunder of cannon and musketry fire. The struggle had been obstinate, but unequal from the beginning. No force could have stood against the army of General Magnan, against its bravery



and dash; and it speaks volumes for the powerful organization of the insurrection, for the vigour of the combatants it enlisted, to have prolonged resistance as it did. The proof of the ardour by which the latter were animated will be found in the fact of their having gathered the scattered material of their overthrown works and run up new barricades ere the troops had regained their quarters, when they had scarcely turned their backs upon their former positions.

This time the St. Martin, St. Denis, and the Temple quarters were spared the melancholy privilege of being the centre of the revolt, the movement tended in the direction of the seat of the government. In this it conformed to revolutionary tradition. In 1830 and 1848 the St. Antoine and St. Martin quarters had shared the honours of the first engagements, after which the action had been removed to the neighbourhood of the Bank, the Louvre, and the Palais-Royal.

On the 4th December the insurrection had to proceed a step farther. From the Tuileries it had to reach the Elysée. It is to this end that it left behind it the scene of its last engagements to move on the Rue St. Honoré, the Place Notre-Dame des Victoires, the neighbourhood of the Bank, and the Bourse. Nevertheless it kept its base of operations in the Rues du Petit-Carreau and Montorgueil. But a regiment, the 19th of the Line, occupied the Palais-Royal, and by a bold charge swept the Place Notre-Dame des Victoires, covered both the Bank and the Bourse, and stormed the entrenchments of the Rues Pagevin and Bourbon-Ville-neuve.

Thus dislodged from their outposts, the insurgents retreated once more upon the Church of St. Eustache, the Rues Montorgueil and du Petit-Carreau, where the fanatic Dussoubs was haranguing the people and directing the battle. In those two streets a series of solid works had been constructed,

and a night attack offered perils the more formidable that the houses were occupied by the revolt. The troops were fired at from the windows and from the cellar casements. The position was not tenable; Colonel de Lourmel saw it; he put himself at the head of his troops and succeeded in carrying the last refuge of the insurgents.

So rapid and complete a result had not been obtained without some heavy sacrifice. The killed and wounded were many on both sides. Dussoubs, like Baudin, was killed at the head of the rioters. The other engagements were but the pale reflex of the energetic resistance of that evening. A few barricades were still thrown down here and there, but the chiefs had ceased the battle, they had deferred the resumption of the struggle till the next day, the 5th. A few of the forlorn hope only kept up the agitation, and fired from some dark back slums on our soldiers or on our agents going their rounds.

We had foreseen the fate of this last attempt of the insurgents; it was condemned to an inevitable check, and it was almost certain that at a given moment in the evening demoralisation would enter their camp; they would fly to their homes or to their ordinary meeting places. The latter were known to us. We had posted pickets of our agents in their vicinity. They had orders to watch their goings and comings, and above all to arrest suspected individuals who bore upon them the traces of their share in the fight. Thanks to those measures numerous arrests were made during that evening, and the insurrection was deprived of several of its chiefs. Those arrests were not without danger to those charged with their execution. Most of those arrested were still armed, and made a desperate struggle to escape our agents; three of these brave fellows were seriously wounded.

A great many of the leaders, especially those who had taken no part in the second attempt,

were assembled in conference to decide upon the measures for the next day. If we had not in every one of those assemblies a man in our pay, we had at least some in the most important of them. It is through the latter that we were kept informed of the dissensions that existed in the revolutionary camp.

Some—those who had not fought, and who during those two days had only lent the cause a moral and literary support—continued their demands for a struggle to the bitter end. The motive of their persistence was this: we no longer fight to conquer, but to keep the provinces in suspense. If we resist, the uprising will spread to the departments, and through them we may regain our advantages here. If, on the contrary, we lay down our arms we discourage the provinces, and everything is lost; nothing remains but to bend beneath the yoke of the conqueror and to submit to his will.\*

The others who had taken an active part in the struggle, who had been able to measure the power and stability of the forces of which the Government disposed, declared a prolonged conflict impossible, and insisted upon a postponement of it till more propitious days. In their opinion there was no longer the least chance of success. A goodly number of chiefs were either killed or taken. The workmen from the outskirts had, on leaving the barricades, declared that they would not put in an appearance the next morning; they didn't see the use of being maimed without benefiting the cause. As for the provinces, no reliance was placed

\* From the papers seized at the time of the arrests we have been able to judge the rapid method by which the Paris revolutionaries and those of the provinces communicated. As early as the morning of the 2nd Paris had told the provinces to prepare the uprising, and from a great many points, above all from the centre and the south, the provinces said to Paris, "We are ready, we'll begin at the first signal." It is those assurances that encouraged certain leaders to prolong the struggle. We shall soon see how well those that gave them meant to keep their word—to take to arms and to vigorously engage the struggle.

on them. From the manner in which the Government had taken its measures in Paris, it was easy to judge that it had neglected nothing in the departments. There remained no hope of success.

The decision that prevailed in the end was a kind of mutual concession. It was arranged that from seven in the morning until mid-day the rebels would repair in small groups to those points where fresh barricades might be attempted. Once there the attitude of the Government would be watched, and if it left Paris, as it had done on the 4th, without troops during the morning, the insurgents would begin reconstructing anew at mid-day in those quarters where a sympathy with the cause might be relied upon. Accredited emissaries would keep up communications between the groups in the public thoroughfares and the acting committees; the latter were to give the signal either for a fresh attempt or for a final retreat at mid-day.

The Elysée had attentively kept pace with every movement of the troops, with every incident of the day. The dispatches from the commander-in-chief of the army of Paris and from the Prefect of Police succeeded each other at brief intervals. Besides those means of information the generals engaged had frequently sent their aides-de-camp to directly acquaint the Prince with the aspect of the struggle. One of those communications had caused a profound and natural emotion at the Elysée. At the moment when he was engaged with the barricades of the Rue St. Denis, General de Cotte, judging the resistance much more energetic than he had supposed it would be, had directly notified to the Prince the strength of the insurrection. The general called attention to the episodes of 1830 and 1848; he deemed the attack to be as serious as it had been then; he recommended the most energetic measures, and at the same time warned the Elysée to be on its guard. The

insurgents might get as far, and solid means of defence were necessary.

General de Cotte was one of the most resolute officers in the army. Brave amongst the bravest, his coolness of temper in action was sufficiently known not to lay itself open to the suspicion of being influenced by the excitement of the moment. What he said must be true, and it would be well to take heed of it. Scarcely had the aide-de-camp left the Elysée than Colonel Fleury, the most intimate adviser of the Prince, entered his private room and submitted a plan in the event of the insurrection getting to the gates of the Elysée, the defence of which was beset by many difficulties, the security of which was by no means sufficient. There should be no hesitation in abandoning the residence, exposed on all sides, in order to retreat to a spot where organised resistance became possible, where one would not only be safe against all surprise, but where a regular siege might be sustained. Colonel Fleury proposed the removal to the Tuileries, and the thorough fortifying of its approaches. In this way, far from seeming to take flight, one drew closer to the centre of action, and might take up a position offering every condition of security. This plan suited the Prince, and without delay he charged its author, Colonel Fleury, to go and arrange for its execution with the Minister for War.

An hour afterwards General Rollin received orders to put the Tuileries in a state of defence, and the most ample powers to execute his mission. He was to get the necessary cannon and war material from the fort of Mont Valérien. Night would be taken advantage of to move the material. At daybreak on the 5th General Rollin was to have everything ready, and the Prince-President would remove to the Tuileries. But the news of the evening, the defeat of the insurgents, their impossibility to resume the offensive, had changed



the aspect of affairs. General de Cotte himself came to say, "We are masters of the position." Similar assurances came both from the Prefecture of Police and headquarters at the self-same time. Towards two o'clock in the morning, and again by the advice of Colonel Fleury, the orders to General Rollin were countermanded, and the Prince-President remained at the Elysée. Everything from that moment led us to hope that the most difficult days were over.

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

### IMAGINARY EXECUTIONS.

The Morning of the 5th December.—The Troops go out once more.—The last of the Barricades.—Paris at Peace.—Order of the Day of General de Saint-Arnaud.—The Number of the Dead and Wounded.—The Impostures of our Detractors.—The Number of Arrests.—The Decree on the Voting withdrawn.—Removal of the Generals-Deputies from Mazas to Ham.—The Liberations at Vincennes and at Mont Valérien.—General de Courtigis and M. Odilon Barrot.—The ex-Members set free in spite of themselves.

DURING the night of the 5th I had been enabled to communicate to the Government, and to General Magnan in particular, the programme of the insurgents. The day of the 4th had taught the authorities wisdom, and this time my counsel was listened to.

The resumption of the struggle had to be prevented, tranquillity was to be restored to Paris. I asked for an important display of troops, for strong patrols in the turbulent quarters, and for the occupation of the strategical points indicated in the original plan of the Minister for War.

In fact, from an early hour on the morning of the 5th the troops left their barracks, and both Paris and its outskirts were occupied in every direction.

Only a few slight barricades had been thrown up here and there by some of the fanatics, principally at the *Barrière Rochechouart*, on the *Boulevard Poissonnière*, at the *Red-Cross*, and at *la Chapelle St. Denis*. They were carried by a simple charge, and their defenders took flight at the first volley. Some of them paid this belated resistance with their lives. The principal task of the troops during this morning was the dispersing of the mobs collected on various points by the persistent provocation of the leaders. A few charges with the bayonet made an end of them, and, protected by the army, our agents were able to lay hands on several of the most desperate rioters.

At twelve o'clock the sections and the committees sent orders in all directions to cease the struggle, to hide without delay the arms and the ammunition, to refrain from all further gathering, and to provoke by no fresh manifestation the rigour of the army or of the police. Between twelve and two o'clock the streets resumed their ordinary aspect as if by enchantment.

But the experience of the past had taught the military authorities, and what had been omitted on the 3rd at the moment when it should have been done, was carried out on the 5th at the hour when the danger was a hundredfold less. After the overthrow of the last barricades, after the dispersing of all the gatherings, the troops bivouacked in the principal thoroughfares, and occupied whole houses at the corners of such streets where the renewal of the insurrection seemed possible. Every possible measure to finally discourage the revolt and to reassure peaceable folk was ostensibly taken.

Towards four in the afternoon traffic was restored, the shops were open once more, and Paris resumed its ordinary aspect. A few groups wandered about the neighbourhoods that had been the scene of the strife from mere curiosity, but their bearing and behaviour was altogether inoffensive, and the agents

confined themselves to preventing all obstruction. The meetings of the chiefs of the sections, those of a few of the ex-members who had persistently sent their unhappy victims to unvarying defeat, also broke up. Save for a few small groups conspiracy was at an end, and this parting sigh of the revolt found its vent only in maledictions indulged with closed doors against the victor.

General de Saint-Arnaud's order of the day told the army that its mission was finished, the Paris population that it could quietly set about its business, France that the insurrection was defeated and the new Government firmly established.

Subjoined is the order of the day :—

“SOLDIERS !

“You have accomplished this day a great act in your military existence. You have saved the country from anarchy and plunder, you have saved the Republic. You have shown yourselves what you always will be, brave, devoted, indefatigable. France admires and thanks you. The President of the Republic will never forget your devotion.

“The victory could not be doubtful; the true people, the law-abiding are with you.

“In every garrison of France your companions in arms are proud of you, and would if needs be follow your example.

“A. DE SAINT-ARNAUD.”

The struggle over, a painful duty remained to be fulfilled—to ascertain the losses our gallant army had suffered. At the same time the number of the dead and wounded of the insurgents was made up.

The truth on this point has been greatly perverted. To re-establish it we confine ourselves to the reproduction of the extract from the official report of the Prefect of Police to the President of the Republic, dated 15th December, 1851. The

figures it gives were obtained from the best sources and are beyond the possibility of controversy.\*

If we wish to ascertain the losses on both sides, statistics resulting from minute inquiries enable us to give the official and indisputable number of the killed and wounded :—

## KILLED.

Military (officers, non-commissioned officers, and privates) . . . . .	26
Individuals belonging to the lookers-on rather than to the insurgents . . . . .	8
Insurgents killed on the spot . . . . .	116
Insurgents who died at their homes in consequence of their wounds . . . . .	59
	<hr/>
	175
Total killed . . . . .	209
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## WOUNDED.

Military . . . . .	184
Insurgents . . . . .	115
	<hr/>
Total wounded . . . . .	299
	<hr/>

Subsequent to this report some more deaths attributed to wounds received during the struggle of the 3rd and 4th December occurred at the civil and military hospitals and at private residences. It was also ascertained that among the revolutionaries by profession some that had disappeared and who were supposed to have gone to foreign countries had died of their injuries; there were about twenty or twenty-five. A few others that were wounded had been sheltered by staunch friends who hid them from the police. But the number of killed and wounded does not very materially differ from the statement contained in the report of the 15th December, and is not any way near the fancy figures given by the pamphleteers of the times.

\* "Rapport du Préfet de Police sur les événements du Deux-Décembre, 1851." (Imprimerie de Charles Lahure, Rue de Vaugirard, 9.)

About six hundred killed and wounded, such is the strict truth.\*

It will be asked how a severe struggle like that of the 4th December did not cause a greater number of victims. We have already indicated the reasons in the course of this narrative. The fact is easily explained on the side of the insurgents. They fought behind the shelter of solid works; the bullets and balls struck against the barricades. Therefore it was only at the moment of the assault that they ran a serious risk, and they succeeded in cleverly shielding themselves. The moment they considered the works confided to their defence as no longer offering sufficient security, they entrenched themselves at once behind another barricade. They had everywhere secured their retreat with a rare foresight. Only those—and they were but a small number—who were absolutely blinded by the excitement of the struggle awaited the shock of the troops and paid their resistance with their lives. But nowhere did the insurgents show themselves in masses and without being covered, and it is only in those conditions that the fire could have done great damage.

On the side of the troops, the prudence of the officers protected the soldiers against the perils of their ardour. Their movements were conducted with great circumspection, and at the dangerous moment of the charge the impulse was such that the insurgents, as we have already said, preferred to get away rather than defend themselves. Besides, the latter were very badly armed, and more skilled in the use of the knife—to which, however, they dared not resort—than in the use of a weapon

\* To those who would dispute the exactness of our figures we offer an easy method of verification. In Paris no more than elsewhere people do not die without their decease being registered. If the number of deaths of the days of the battle be examined, it will be found that it only exceeds the normal daily number by such figures as we have given.



requiring qualities rare to be found in an improvised combatant.

But the point on which the writers of the period, not to say those of the present day, have dwelt with the greatest relish is that of the nocturnal executions, accomplished amidst the profoundest mystery.

Well, those pretended nocturnal executions, those inhuman butcheries, should be brought to light once for all; the truth should be spoken with regard to them. Well, then, the whole is nothing better than a tissue of lies, a dastardly and odious calumny against a Government which has only used its force within the strict measure of the necessities of the struggle.

No doubt some insurgents taken with their arms upon them were shot, but they were shot, some on the barricades continuing to fight and refusing to surrender, threatening and striking when summoned to abandon all resistance; others in the Passage du Saumon when caught in the act of murdering our soldiers; finally one in the Rue de Jérusalem at the moment he attempted to cut his way into the Prefecture of Police.

And we must specify here. The number of those executed is included in the number of the insurgents killed on the spot. They amount, as we have already shown, to 116. In estimating at 40, according to our and General Magnan's reports, the number of insurgents shot, we are above rather than below the truth.

There, and there only, lies the truth. No one knew and still knows it better than he who writes these lines. He does not shrink from any avowal; he fears none of the responsibilities his conscience prompted him to undertake; he knows what is due to history, and he gives it this due, unhesitatingly pledging his honour as to the exactness of his narrative.

Besides, it is at the moment of the struggle itself that those abominable calumnies were invented

and made current. The hatred of the vanquished explains their enormous mendacity. At that period everything was brought into play to give credit to those monstrous fables, which already at the date of the 15th December, 1851, evoked an energetic protest from the Prefect of Police in his official report.\*

"Must I," he asks, "take note here of an infamous calumny which certain people have not scrupled to spread, without assuredly believing in it themselves? They have mentioned nocturnal executions in the Champ de Mars and in the outskirts of Paris. This is nothing less than a detestable falsehood. The insurgents have been treated with all possible moderation and humanity, treated as the vanquished by generous victors.

"Sparing of their victory and their strength, the army and the authorities have disdained reprisal."

And now that the truth has been said, let us confront it with the inventions of M. Victor Hugo. What abominable fiction! and what boldness it required to dare create, as he has done, scenes in which every word from the beginning to the end was false and chimerical. Let us listen to the inventor of these tragic scenes. The first one is laid at the Tuileries.

"An hour after midnight," says M. Victor Hugo, "a great noise was heard from outside; soldiers carrying torches entered the vaults; the prisoners who were sleeping awoke with a start; an officer shouted to them to get up.

"They were taken out as they had been brought in, pell-mell.

"As they came out they were put in pairs haphazard and a sergeant counted them aloud. No questions as to their names, their profession, their family connections, what they were and whence

\* "Rapport du Préfet de Police sur les événements du Deux-Décembre, 1851," p. 21.

they came, were asked. Their number sufficed for the task in hand.

"In that way three hundred and thirty-seven were counted."\*

Three hundred and thirty-seven! Nothing is wanting in this invention. He specifies with a marvellous assurance even to the number of these imaginary victims.

The poet spares no cost; he continues the fable by giving us the most minute details of the starting of the column and its journey. Let us still listen to M. Victor Hugo. He has created those personages; let us see the fate he reserves to them.

"Once counted they were ranged in a serried column, still two by two and holding each other's arm. They were not bound, but on both sides of the column, to left and to right, were three rows of soldiers, with rifles loaded and in serried files; a battalion in front, a battalion behind the column. They were told to close up, and started enveloped by this moving mass of bayonets.

"The Tuileries left behind, they turned to the right and followed the quay as far as the Place de la Concorde. They crossed the bridge and turned to the right once more. They passed the Esplanade of the Invalides and reached the deserted quay of the Gros-caillou.

"At the Pont de Jéna, they turned to the left and got into the Champ de Mars.

"There they were all shot."

And we even trouble ourselves to answer this fable. No column of insurgents, not even that of the three hundred and thirty-seven of M. Victor Hugo, left the vaults of the Tuileries to go to the Champ de Mars, either by way of the Pont de Jéna or by any other route. *Not an insurgent, not one, was shot in the Champ de Mars.* We challenge

\* Victor Hugo, "Histoire d'un Crime," vol. ii. p. 166. Calmann Lévy, Paris.

M. Victor Hugo to support the smallest of his assertions with one authentic document, by one single evidence from no matter whom. He tells us of two battalions which he places, as he is in the habit of doing on the stage, one behind, one in front of his victims. First of all, to which regiment did those battalions belong? M. Victor Hugo, who shows himself so minutely informed, ought indisputably to know this. Let him tell us. The illustrious poet is probably not aware that two battalions on a war footing count no less than two thousand men. Some of these two thousand men are certainly dead by now; but the greatest number must be still alive. And is it likely that these officers and soldiers, both witnesses of and actors in this abominable drama, would have waited until this day to publicly manifest their indignation. If under the Empire fear imposed silence perhaps, would not they under the Republic have found their absolute liberty of speech. Will it be denied that among those surviving officers and soldiers there must be a certain number who this day profess republican opinions? Would not these, at any rate at this period of invective against the 2nd December, have eagerly seized the opportunity for a similar revelation, to furnish the men who insult us with a truth to substitute for their falsehoods? And even admitting this Republican abnegation, this excessive discretion, this kind of conspiracy to keep silent, may not we suppose that it is among these officers and soldiers, who took a share in this massacre in the Champ de Mars, that M. Victor found the witnesses who have so minutely informed him? The depositions of those ocular witnesses, are they not in M. Victor Hugo's possession? Let him publish them. And if perchance he thinks us too exacting we'll render his impossible justification still more convenient to him. We'll be satisfied with his finding us *one officer, one non-*

*commissioned officer, one private* who confesses to having belonged to this dark and mysterious escort, to having been present at this execution of three hundred and thirty-seven men; if M. Victor does so, we shall tender him our most humble and unqualified apology. But this one invention was not enough. Once the history of one execution written, it cost but a few words to say that this terrible scene was renewed each night. In fact the poet adds:—

“Besides, let us say at once, the wholesale executions were renewed each night after the 3rd of December. Sometimes they took place in the Champ de Mars, sometimes at the Prefecture of Police, sometimes in both places at once.

“When the prisons were full, M. de Maupas said, ‘Take them away to be shot.’”

We are absolutely weary with denying. Let us say, however, that like the execution of the three hundred and thirty-seven, those other executions in the Champ de Mars and the Prefecture of Police never existed save in the ever-dramatic imagination of M. Victor Hugo.

But the climax of M. Victor Hugo’s impudence, and of his clumsiness of invention as well, is shown in the few lines with which the poet-historian closes his chapter.

“The 13th,” he says, “the massacres were not ended yet. On the morning of that day just before dawn a *solitary wayfarer* going along the Rue St. Honoré noticed between two rows of cavalry men three heavily laden covered waggons coming up the street. Their traces might be easily followed by the blood that oozed from their doors. They came from the Champ de Mars, and were going to the Montmartre Cemetery. They were full of corpses.”

That M. Victor Hugo should have laid the action of those stories of executions at the very moment of the strife, when the cannon thundered in the streets of Paris, when the whiz of the rifle bullet



was heard night and day, well and good; there was some sort of pretext. He may have confounded the noise of the discharges from the barricades from which he kept so prudently away with the imaginary rattle of the pretended executions in the Champ de Mars. But to show us wholesale executions, waggons full of bodies on the 13th, eight days after Paris had resumed an absolute calm, assuredly this is presuming too much upon the gullibility of his readers. Would not the whole of Paris have heard the melancholy reports? We once more ask M. Victor Hugo to produce one single witness, be it only his "solitary wayfarer." \*

In terminating those sickening quotations, I cannot help pointing out the guilt, the serious guilt, towards his conscience, towards his country, of him who, for the sole purpose of injuring, invents calumnies as odious as those we, in order to condemn them, have reproduced, and by so doing conferred an honour upon them which they do not deserve.

\* Here again we must repeat what we have said. As a natural consequence of those chimerical executions of which M. Victor Hugo speaks, the number of the dead would have necessarily been very considerable each day; it would have materially increased the normal daily figure of the deaths in Paris from the 4th to the 13th. Yet, by examining the registers from the 5th to the 13th December, 1851, it will be found that the number of deaths in the city of Paris is within a decimal fraction more or less the same as that of the corresponding period of the previous years.

M. Emile Zola is right when he accused the disciples of the Romantic school and their master, M. Victor Hugo, of gratuitously insulting people's credulity. Why, if M. Victor Hugo absolutely wanted three covered waggons and a solitary wayfarer for his *mise en scène*, why did he not lay his action elsewhere than in the Rue St. Honoré. It is of all the Paris streets the last where there would be *one solitary wayfarer*. Close by there is and was then a market as large as Covent Garden, and just before daybreak the street is absolutely crowded with vehicles of all descriptions. In addition, unless these three covered vans and their escort were absolutely bent upon a constitutional, there was no necessity to come through the Rue St. Honoré. Their way from the Champ de Mars to the Montmartre cemetery lay in quite a different direction.—*Trans.*

On the subject of the number of arrests made during those December days, people have equally indulged the most erroneous comments. The same official report of the Prefect of Police also gives the indisputable number of individuals arrested at the date of the 4th December. The report is couched in the following terms : \*—

“The number of arrests has equally been the subject of statistics of which I must at least record the substance here. Two thousand one hundred and thirty-three political arrests were made, in which number figure two hundred and sixteen representatives. Only twenty-nine of them are still detained at St. Pélagie, where they are placed in the most favourable conditions; the other prisoners have been removed to the forts of Bicêtre and Ivry, where they remain at the disposal of the military authorities, who are deliberating with regard to them.”

If the cessation of the struggle had restored material tranquillity, an important decision of the Government had brought back considerable appeasement to the public mind. The decree relating to the manner of voting had been rescinded. Taking count of the warnings with which it had been assailed, of the numerous reports I had communicated, the Minister of the Interior had replaced the decree of the 2nd December by a new one, which abrogated the manner of voting in the registers.†

“The voting will take place,” ran the new decree, “by secret polling, by an ‘aye’ or a ‘no,’ by means of a written or printed voting paper.” Public opinion energetically claimed this, and the satisfaction accorded to it resulted in a beneficent slackening of the strained situation.

\* “Rapport du Préfet de Police sur les événements du Deux-Décembre,” p. 22, 561.

† See the *Moniteur Universel* of the 5th December, 1851.

Article 4 of the new decree added :—

“The poll will be open during the days of the 20th and 21st December in the administrative seat of each commune from eight in the morning till four in the afternoon.”

People could not charge Louis Napoleon with abusing his power, henceforth undisputed, by keeping the dictatorship in his hands. The convoking of the electoral committees had been the first act of his new authority. Nor had he suffered any delay to occur in their meeting save that strictly necessary to the material preparations for the polling.

The 21st December was the last stage of this obstinate struggle began by the various parties two years previously against the Prince and against the immense majority of the country. The 21st December was the day of the dénouement so long waited for. On that day France would say whether she approved or condemned the act that had just been accomplished. If she gave it her sanction she emerged at last from the perilous darkness of the revolution to lay the foundation of a government in which the serious guarantees of order and stability were united.

We have already pointed out the care with which the Government of Louis Napoleon avoided, during those troublous days it had just passed through, not only all useless rigour, but also all severity not justified by the absolute necessity of the State. The days of the 3rd and 4th December have abundantly proved the necessity of the preventive arrests of the generals-deputies. What dangerous burden would not their freedom have proved to them at the moment of the struggle? To have shared this struggle, to have placed themselves at the head of those bands of insurgents in order to lead them against those valiant legions of which they had been the well-beloved and respected chiefs, to fire on their brothers-in-arms, and, if fortune had smiled

on them, to have inflicted upon this valorous army the humiliation of defeat, such would have been the series of poignant trials to sustain.

Not to share the struggle, to remain passive lookers-on at the uprising they had provoked by their attitude, by their language, by their votes in the Chamber — to behold those ill-fated beings, misled by their excitations, shed their blood and not to give at least the consolation and encouragement of their active complicity—would this have proved a more acceptable way out of the difficulty? To what bitter recriminations would not they have become exposed? What insults and accusations would not have been showered upon them? Would not the words at the very sound of which the soldier cowers—traitor and coward—have been incessantly dinned in their ears?

Between these two fatal situations, to one of which a terrible dilemma condemned them, which to choose? And if ever captivity could become desirable assuredly it must have been in those days to those illustrious generals. It shielded the responsibility so rashly pledged by them, to say nothing of their lives; it saved their honour at the cost of a few days' liberty.

We only intended Mazas as a provisional sojourn for those prisoners of State. Ham was their final destination; their removal thither was to take place during the night of the 2nd-3rd December. But the attributes of the Prefect of Police stopped at the department of the Seine; hence it was the Minister of the Interior upon whom devolved the duty of removing the ex-members.\* I had instructed the governor of Mazas to deliver up his prisoners under the conditions arranged. I had at the same time provided for their safe departure. My functions terminated there.

\* The Prefect of Police has no authority whatsoever over the prisons outside Paris and the department of the Seine; they come within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Minister of the Interior.

Fancy, then, my surprise when at the hour fixed for their departure I found that the most indispensable measures had been omitted. The Ministry of the Interior had occupied itself neither with the means of transport nor with the measures of surveillance during the journey from Paris to Ham, nor with the organisation of a relay of special warders in the interior of the prison. A squadron of the 7th Lancers, which was to escort the carriages from Mazas to the Northern Railway Station, as well as the agents I had posted along the whole of the route, had to wait for hours until the Minister of the Interior recognised the necessity of adjourning the departure until the next day. The following morning I judged it prudent to offer the Minister of the Interior, notwithstanding the extreme need I had of all my people, to supply him with the staff necessary for the transfer. The Minister eagerly accepted this encroachment upon his functions, and finally, in the night of the 3rd-4th December, the ex-members destined to quit Mazas set out for Ham.

At Ham also the want of foresight of the ministerial authorities showed itself, because on their return the commissaries informed me of the utter absence of organisation in the most essential arrangements. I acquainted the Minister of the Interior with these facts in the following dispatch:

“Prefect of Police to Minister of the Interior.

“6th December.

“The commissaries of police just returned from Ham have noted all absence of organisation in the service at the prison. It is most important that a service of surveillance first and a personal service for the prisoners also should be organised without delay. A few police agents have been left behind as a provisional arrangement.

“DE MAUPAS.”



Among the prisoners transferred to Ham were Generals Cavaignac, Bedeau, Changarnier, Le Flô, de Lamoricière, and Colonel Charras. At his own request M. Thiers had been allowed to remain in Paris for the time being.

Besides those ex-members there remained a considerable number at Mazas, Vincennes, and at Mont Valérien. At the former place we principally kept the members of the Mountain and such fanatics as it would have been dangerous to set at liberty. At Vincennes and at Mont Valérien were especially those members of the Right and the moderate republicans of the Left from whom we no longer had anything to fear after the events accomplished, and above all, after the satisfaction they had given themselves of manifesting their disapproval by the demonstrations of the 2nd December.

What were we to do with this fraction of the erstwhile chamber? We were unanimous upon the point. Their liberation was decided on. A certain number of those short-term prisoners had returned to their homes, some at their own request or at that of their families, others on the initiative of the Prince, of the Minister of the Interior, or on mine.\* I was naturally charged with the setting at liberty of those who were still detained; but my first orders to this effect met with sufficiently curious difficulties. At Vincennes, as at Mont Valérien, the tranquil mass of ex-members who had only engaged in the hurly-burly of the 10th arrondissement for conscience' sake, or out of consideration to their electors, scarcely waited till the doors were opened; they made joyously for their homes, thankful not to have paid more dearly for their attempt at resistance. On the other hand, a certain number protested against being set at

\* Several ex-members to whom the order for their liberation was communicated refused to avail themselves of it, not wishing to separate their fate from that of their colleagues.

liberty without their express solicitations. We were compelled to summon them to leave the place, and our summons was of no avail.

Matters had assumed a curious aspect indeed, notably at Vincennes. General de Courtigis, who came to render an account of the resistance he encountered, gave me in his own military way an amusing sketch of his reception from those of the ex-members who declined their liberty. "The most obstinate in his protests," he said, "is Odilon Barrot. Scarcely had I informed those gentlemen of my orders to open the doors of Vincennes to them than he got upon a chair, and from the elevation of this improvised tribune exhorted them in the most violent terms to resist the arbitrary decision forced upon them." The General added: "Of course I allowed him to go on for a few minutes, but perceiving from the manner in which he began that the thing might last for an hour or so, I spoke in my turn. Addressing M. Odilon Barrot, I said to him, 'Monsieur Barrot, the time for speeches and protests is passed; you have made a great many for the last twenty years, and you perceive what it has brought you to. It is not my place to reply or to discuss. Will you go or not without protest or discussion? If so, the doors are open to you; if not, I close them and apply for further instructions to the proper quarters.'"

A silence of a few minutes followed this categorical ultimatum. Every eye was turned upon M. Odilon Barrot, who had arrogated to himself the presidency and the direction of his colleagues' conduct. He considered his eighteen years of errors under the Government of July as constituting titles to infallibility, and dogmatically dictated the resolutions to be taken. To the few words of General de Courtigis the orator-prisoner replied solemnly: "The arrested members protest against the new attempt against their persons;

they will only yield to force to make them leave the prison and to resume their liberty."

Almost the same scene had been enacted at Mont Valérien. As General de Courtigis had justly observed, the time for speeches and protests had gone by; I bethought myself of a very simple device to cut short all discussion. I procured the number of carriages necessary for the conveyance of all those ex-members who had persisted in remaining at Vincennes and Mont Valérien. Once the carriages arrived, the ex-members took their seats and were taken to their domiciles or bidden to alight at the spot where the carriage stopped.

Hence all that remained in the Paris prisons of the so-called political prisoners were the ex-members of the Mountain who had been arrested, some as a matter of precaution, the majority for their active share in the insurrection; furthermore, the members of the secret societies; and finally, the individuals taken at the barricades and in the seditious gatherings.

But there still remained at large a considerable number of dangerous persons who were watching their opportunity to give a fresh signal for insurrection. Consequently the vigilance of the Prefecture of Police did not relax, and the arrests continued. They led to important discoveries, seizures of arms of all kinds, rifles, pistols, hand-shells, daggers, and quantities of ammunition. They also placed in our hands documents precious to the furtherance of justice, for they established the guilt of the arrested insurgents and provided us with a clue to their accomplices.

From the date of the 5th December Paris resumed its ordinary aspect and business its ordinary course. The stock exchange, the thermometer of public confidence, hailed the success of the *Coup d'État* with a rise of five francs in two days in the public funds. People breathed at last, and felt glad; many of those who, from force of circum-

stances, had protested against events, blessed from the bottom of their hearts the beneficent solution which guaranteed France a lasting stability—as lasting, at least, as wisdom and reason themselves were capable of being in a country so fundamentally shaken by the revolution.

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE JACQUERIE IN THE PROVINCES.

The Insurrection in the Departments.—Troubles in the Department of the Allier.—Taking of La Palisse.—Assassination of the Gendarmes.—Pillage and Orgies at Poligny.—The Occupation of and Assassinations at Clamecy.—Insurrection in the Departments of the Gers and the Hérault.—Massacre of the Gendarmes.—The Var and the Lower Alps.—Robbery and Rapine by the Insurgents.—The Strength of Demagogy at the 2nd December, what it would have been in 1852.—The real Aim of the Anarchists.—Their Appetites and their Passions.—The Duty of Louis Napoleon and how he understood it.

ENERGETIC as was the resistance of the revolutionaries during the 3rd and 4th of December in Paris, it was but a mild specimen of the conflict they prepared to engage in in 1852 for the triumph of their abominable doctrines. The 2nd December had surprised them in their preparations; their stock of arms and ammunition was far from being complete; their numbers were not filled up, the exiles that were to fill the gaps could not be warned in time; the recruiting, which above all could only be the work of the eleventh hour, had not been carried out on a sufficiently large scale; and amidst the general commotion, the chiefs of the secret societies had only succeeded in getting a small part of their adherents together. Still we had seen enough of it to enable us to judge of the perils the cause of order would have been exposed to from a properly organised demagogical army,

disciplined and at its full strength; as it would not have failed to be, if recruited several months in advance, for the fixed term of 1852.

In the provinces as well as in Paris the 2nd December surprised the demagogues while they were still preparing. The *Coup d'État* had been so much talked about for the last twelve months without showing the least sign of reality that they had ceased to believe in it, and everywhere they imagined the struggle fixed for its constitutional date in the month of May, 1852. Nevertheless what strength, what anarchical passions, what abominable designs did not they reveal when taken unawares? If a terrible massacre did not devastate France on the 2nd December it is again our valiant army and our steadfast administrators and magistrates that we have to thank for it. Yet it is heart-rending to contemplate the cruel and bloody trials several of our departments suffered notwithstanding. There were still many sanguinary and ferocious acts to deplore; there was still a long period of deep mourning in many respectable families; there were still too many poignant sorrows to remember for a country that respects herself.

At the first news of events, the demagogues in every part of the provinces understood but too well that the date of the uprising of 1852 had been fatally advanced, that Paris would spring to arms, and that it was their duty to second its efforts by a general insurrection. There where the revolutionary element was the most violent the taking to arms was immediate. A few more days were necessary to other departments, whose organisation was not so forward to begin the movement; but on many points the delay in the preparing for the struggle fortunately lasted till the day of the absolute defeat of the insurrection in Paris. The discouragement produced by it caused the project to be abandoned. Hence those privileged counties escaped the sore trials of a civil war.



The large towns were strongly occupied by the troops, but though the agitation was very violent, the revolt went no further than menace. Lyons, Marseilles, Bordeaux, Nantes, Toulouse, all had their seditious gatherings. A few isolated shots were fired on the officers and the troops, but there was no battle, and it is to this comparatively pacific attitude of the great centres that we must attribute the refusal of certain populations to listen to the voices of the agitators and the recruiting agents of the insurrection.

In a few departments the ground had been so carefully prepared that the uprising was immediate. The rebels were enabled to surprise the authorities, possess themselves of several towns, establish themselves without opposition, and inaugurate the reign of the most execrable terror for a few days. Robbery, pillage, assassination, rape, arson, nothing was wanting to this mournful exhibition of the programme of 1852. It was thus in the departments of the Allier, the Nièvre, the Cher, the Yonne, the Jura, the Gers, the Lot-et-Garonne, the Hérault, the Var, the Drôme, the Upper and Lower Alps, without mentioning other departments where, though less violent, the revolutionary saturnalia left nevertheless its bloody imprint.

The elements of the summary narrative we are about to give have been borrowed from the most authentic sources. We had before us for each department the reports of the *procureurs-généraux*, of the prefects, and of the gendarmerie. There is an absolute and melancholy concord between them. It would require more than a volume to record the atrocities committed. The plan we have proposed ourselves does not admit of such extensive details, hence we only offer an analysis; but it will suffice to give a just idea of the hatred and ferocious passions that animated the foes of society and to point out once more the perils from which the 2nd December saved France.

The department of the Allier was one of the most violently undermined by the socialistic propaganda. At the first news of the events in Paris, on the morning of the 3rd, bands of insurgents, armed with rifles, pistols, scythes, pitchforks, pikes, and daggers, had assembled in most of the cantons. They moved upon Moulins, Gannat, La Palisse, and Montluçon. Women and children provided with baskets and bags intended to collect the loot followed in their wake.

La Palisse had the mournful privilege of being the first point occupied by the insurrection. A column of downright bandits had formed itself at Donjon. As a prelude to its exploits it had arrested the mayor, M. de la Boutresse, a most worthy citizen, the justice of the peace, and a few notable inhabitants. They had been dragged from their beds and thrown half naked into a cart, which on this icy winter's morning was to take them to the prison of La Palisse.

At its arrival at La Palisse the band found, to defend its entrance, the sub-prefect, M. de Rochefort, and a few gendarmes, but it immediately opened a murderous fire, and those brave champions of order were compelled to fall back upon the sub-prefecture after having left several men on the ground. Scarcely had they reached there when they were joined by the insurgents, who seized upon the sub-prefect and subjected him to the most cruel treatment. A new conflict ensued, and several gendarmes, besides their lieutenant and the quartermaster, fell mortally wounded.

The unfortunate quartermaster was riddled with shot, but he breathed still. The chief of the band, a notary, gave his fellow brutes the signal to finish him. He lodged in the chest first, in the head afterwards, several pistol bullets, and the victim was dispatched at last with the butt end of a rifle and stoned besides. The same method was repeated with a gendarme fallen by his side; the bodies were

dragged about and left to the women, who pierced them with pitchforks and daggers, after which the whole of the band joined in a merry dance round the bodies to the tune of the ditties of our most evil days, and the shouts of *Vive la guillotine ! Vive la République !* Down with the priests ! Down with the tyrant ! Death to the traitors ! By the latter were meant the honest folk. The band spread through the town to rob, to pillage, to gorge itself with any and everything ; the sacking of the place had just been resolved upon when a squadron of cavalry, directed on the first news of the dangers that threatened the town, presented itself at the gates. Of course there was an immediate stampede of the insurgents, who fled in all directions into the country, abandoning their spoil and their prisoners, also leaving as an evidence of their passage their ill-fated victims on the battle-ground.

At other points of the department columns of mobile gendarmerie and guards succeeded in dispersing the bands, and with the exception of a few skirmishes order was restored during the day of the 7th. But four days of hand-to-hand struggle with the jacquerie, such was the balance of the department of the Allier.

In the Jura things assumed a more atrocious character. Poligny was fated to acquire a terrible celebrity in the history of this mournful epoch. In the night between the 3rd and 4th the tocsin rang in all the communes in the neighbourhood of Poligny. The plan, settled long ago in expectation of a favourable opportunity, was to get possession of this small borough, to make it into a centre for action, and to move afterwards on the county town of the department.

The programme was strictly carried out. The insurgents succeeded in occupying Poligny ; the sub-prefect, the mayor, and other functionaries besides were arrested, insulted, struck, and taken to prison ; after which a kind of provisional govern-

ment was constituted, and barricades thrown up to resist a possible attack.

Once the unfortunate town in the power of these savages, a series of repulsive atrocities followed as a matter of course. Less blood was shed, perhaps, than at La Palisse, but to make up, as it were, the most horrible infamy was indulged by the rebels. They plundered methodically, public and private moneys were laid hold of, they robbed, they glutted themselves with food and drink, they tortured and killed, they outraged women, and caused such horror and mourning among respectable families as compared with which the loss of life is a blessing. To shame those fiends—if shame they could feel—and to edify those blind republicans who, under the pretext of serving the cause of liberty, are nothing but the unconscious auxiliaries of the revolution, we ought to give the horrible picture of the monstrous deeds committed during those two days at Poligny. But such things cannot be offered to the reader; besides, in recalling them, we should reawaken the sorrow of those families who were the victims. The authors of those crimes are in this way, and unfortunately, shielded by the very enormity of their deeds against the indignation a narrative like that would produce.

After two mortal days the troops could at last get into Poligny; but the fiends cared more for their spoil than for their power. This power they did not defend; but their spoil they carried with them, some to their own homes, others into Switzerland, to thus elude more surely the pursuit of the law.

In the departments of the Cher, the Ain, and the Yonne, the same uprising of the revolutionary hordes, the same atrocities. Here it is a worthy octogenarian who falls, riddled with bullets, for having attempted to protect his commune; there it is a priest, struck down, mutilated, gashed to death, for having dared to speak of peace to these savages.

Everywhere it is robbery, pillage ; and always the same crimes provoked by the same appetites.

In this mid-France of which we have just spoken, one ill-fated town was to be distinguished even among the most afflicted. It was Clamecy. A few men often suffice to throw perturbation and depravation into a whole county. Clamecy had the mournful privilege of possessing some such bold scoundrels. They had recruited many credulous rustics by dazzling them with the stereotyped benefits of insurrection—the division of the property of the wealthy—and, as a first instalment, the pillage of the public buildings and of the private ones at which a rich spoil might be expected. Thanks to these guilty promises, the demagogical organisers had recruited in the town, and above all in the communes of the arrondissements, a downright legion ready to obey their orders and to take up arms for the triumph of their hopes. At the first news of the insurrection in Paris the signal was given from Clamecy ; the tocsin sounded in nearly every commune of the neighbourhood ; the recruits sprang to arms, and coerced the working men by material force to enter their ranks. The women stimulated the ardour of the men. They distributed arms and ammunition, and, above all, prepared bags, baskets, and vehicles of all kinds to convey back to their homes their share of the plunder.

In the one night between the 5th and 6th of December four thousand rebels were marching on Clamecy, and a few hours later the town was in their hands. They constructed in hot haste at the entrance of the place barricades to protect themselves against an expected attack of the troops. Once this first precaution taken, they moved upon the *mairie* and the barracks, which they invested.

Resistance to such a number of assailants had become impossible to the men of order. The *mairie* was occupied, and the barracks taken by



assault. An unfortunate gendarme named Bidaut was tortured to death with the utmost refinement of cruelty. They wished to enjoy the spectacle of his agony; they dragged his mutilated body through the streets, they assailed him with the butt end of their rifles, only ceasing at intervals in order to prolong his martyrdom and to shout the most horrible blasphemies into his ears; but business called them elsewhere, so they made an end of him at last by battering his head to pieces with paving-stones.

Another gendarme was also murdered. A schoolmaster by the name of Mugnier met with the same fate. M. Mulon, a lawyer, was crossing a street where a group of insurgents disported themselves; he was not known to any of them, but his clothes showed the class of society to which he belonged; he was a *bourgeois*, to use the language of the brigands; they had sworn death to his tribe, and to try their hands they killed M. Mulon.

If in those repulsive orgies that which represents authority, that which, middle class or noble, is called wealth, is mercilessly struck at, that which symbolizes religion has still a greater faculty of attracting the fury of the revolutionaries. It is not enough for them to overthrow emperors and kings, they dare strike at God himself; they break His image, they profane His temples, they outrage His ministers, they most cruelly persecute those worthy men, those saint-like women who devote their lives to the education of the young and the care of the sick.

After all it is only logical this letting loose of revolutionary passion against everything and everybody which distantly or near is connected with religion. The principles the latter teach, the only ones by whose aid a nation may be regenerated, are they not the most formidable enemy whom they have to confront? However far they may keep from it, the religious idea still succeeds in get-

ting at such shreds of conscience as they have still left; it gives this conscience, unbeknown to their owners, a secret warning of their impotency, and their rage increases in proportion to the fruitlessness of their efforts. Those impious wretches may for a moment by their culpable promises mislead credulous populations, but one does not insult the altar with impunity; the Church is not at its first proof, as, Heaven be thanked, it is not at its last victories, and we shall still behold—they know it, and it angers them—truth regain its empire and lead across the ages society, so cruelly tried by momentary convulsions, to days of peace and redemption. Whether they like or not, their protests and declamation, their blasphemies and outrages notwithstanding, God will mark the term of the punishment He deems it wise to inflict upon nations in the guise of the sway of those barbarians. That day, vanquished and despised, they shall go back to the chaos of their past, bequeathing to humanity the memory of their misdeeds and their crimes as a warning to prevent their return for many years to come.

In every county occupied by the revolt the priests were in danger of their lives. Not far from Clamecy the worthy vicar of Neuvy, the Abbé Vilain, was on returning from mass surrounded by an armed mob. He was insulted and violently pushed and jostled as far as the presbytery. "Thou hast arms hidden there, we must have those arms," they cry to him. "Behold, these are my only arms, I have no others," says the worthy priest, showing them a crucifix. The reply exasperates the desperadoes; they lay hold of and brutally take him to prison; they put a pistol to his side, the bullet traverses the body, and he is left for dead on the spot. But Providence wished the venerable priest to survive his martyrdom. A few weeks after this abominable scene he was restored to his flock amidst whom he had lived for twenty-six years,

surrounded by esteem and devotion. The Cross of the Legion of Honour was bestowed upon him as a reward for the courage he had displayed.

At Bonny, the vicar, dragged from his home, was maltreated, struck, and taken to prison by a band of insurgents. At the head of the mournful procession marched a young woman brandishing a sabre and a flag, and shouting, "Death to the Vicar!"

At Clamecy a priest suffered the most cruel outrages; he escaped death by a miracle.

If in this ill-fated borough of Clamecy some took to killing and maiming inoffensive and peaceable inhabitants, others took to robbery. They repaired to the receiver of contributions and laid hands on the departmental chest, and were proceeding to the pillage of such houses as had been marked with red ink beforehand, and to the execution of those who figured on the list of the directing committee; but the alarm spreads, the troops arrive, they are already camped in view of Clamecy; the insurgents are compelled to abandon their prey to rush to the barricades, but they only go there to get a sight of the enemy and to make off as fast as they can. Thanks to this prudent flight they escaped their merited fate with the exception of five, who fall mortally wounded, their backs pierced by bullets. A few moments afterwards Clamecy, occupied by our soldiers, is restored to peace; the insurgents have fled in all directions, leaving behind their spoil, their papers, the list of houses to be pillaged and of honest people to murder—in one word, the detailed plan of the misdeeds they had no time to put into execution.

The 9th December the days of trial to Clamecy terminated by a most impressive ceremony. Almost the whole of the town accompanied to their last resting place the two murdered gendarmes. M. Corbin, procureur-general and former Minister of Justice, had made it his duty to honour by his presence those two victims of their feeling of honour

and devotion to their country. On their graves he pronounced those memorable words, which are as it were the summary of the horrible episode in the department of the Nièvre.

“Officers, soldiers of all arms, and all of you gentlemen, which of you would willingly hide his emotion in presence of those two open graves?”

“Here lie two heroes, who both died for the sacred cause of order and society. They died for you, inhabitants of Clamecy, basely assassinated by the hordes of demagoguery.

“For two nights and two days demagoguery was mistress of this town. . . . The populace in revolt, houses forced, invaded, and pillaged, terror possessing itself of every honest heart, eight murders and close upon twenty victims, the most hideous saturnalia, sacking, and murder. Those are their works, such as they promised us for 1852.

“And without the 2nd December, without the patriotic devotion of Napoleon, who would doubt that the demagogues would have kept their word.

“But they reckoned without you, you our heroic army, which but a few days since shed your blood in Paris, and still arrived in time deep down into our provinces. They counted without you, valiant gendarmerie, the select body at all times, the type of devotion and of true courage! . . . . And now, gentlemen, let us unite in one supreme tribute to those glorious martyrs. Honour to you, Cleret, honour to you, Bidaut! In the name of the magistracy, in the name of your comrades of all arms, in the name of all honest citizens, honour to you.

“The country will not forget her debt to your families, and justice will soon have its course.”

Like the centre of France, the south had to sustain cruel trials also. In the department of the Gers the insurrection assumed formidable proportions. They were not only disorderly bands of plunderers and assassins, it was a downright army,

comparatively well disciplined, and led by energetic men. More than four thousand rebels marched upon Auch, no less than six thousand possessed themselves of Mirande, and several thousands took the direction of Fleurance and other localities. But fortunately the military forces were closer at hand in the department of the Gers; the punishment was swift and the excesses of shorter duration.

There, as in the Jura, the Nièvre, and the Allier, the authorities had shown as much devotion as courage. M. de Magnitot, the prefect of the Gers, faced the fire of the insurgents side by side with Colonel de Cognord, whose cool courage and ability saved the town of Auch and preserved the department.

The sub-prefect of Lectoure, M. Lacoste, boldly confronted the rebels, and in spite of their menaces refused to submit to their will. After several days of battle and strife the department was restored to order. The troops counted a number of victims; the insurgents also suffered severe losses, without reckoning those who, taken with their arms upon them, had been handed over to the authorities.

In the department of the Hérault a similar uprising. Beziers was its principal scene. The 3rd, at the first tidings from Paris, the pass-word and instructions were sent to the neighbouring communes, and on the 4th, before daybreak, more than four thousand rebels invaded the town. The summons to disperse of the authority, supported by the military, was answered by a violent volley. The killed were numerous on both sides. The most impatient began to pillage, leaving the rest to fight. Without the firmness of the troops Beziers would have been set on fire and its inhabitants butchered without quarter. As it was the victims were many. The rebels killed for killing's sake. The most inoffensive passers-by were massacred, their only crime being their respectable appearance.



At Bédarieux the scenes of ferocity are more abominable still. The gendarmes are butchered; their barracks set on fire; children are killed; they even try to burn one alive; he succeeds in escaping from the flames, but is thrown back; and the so-called patriotic songs, the cries of "Vive la République," accompany those horrible butcheries.

The small burgh of Capestang shares the same fate. It is in the hands of the insurgents, and the unfortunate gendarmes who try to prevent the sacking of it are struck down by the bullets of the assassins. From one end of the department to the other the desperadoes lift the standard of terror on high, and it wants the energy of General de Rostolan, who scours it in all directions at the head of his columns of mobile guards, to discourage the insurrection and to finally restore order and security.

Our summary of this horrible jacquerie would be incomplete if we did not devote a few lines to the ravages it accomplished in the departments of the Lower Alps and the Var.

The department of the Lower Alps forms as it were a kind of outskirt of Marseilles. It is in the latter town that the chiefs of the demagogical movement came to take their instructions, and these instructions, given long ago, were as follows: "To uprise at the first tidings of a revolt in Paris, to unite the bands, to lay hands upon the principal towns, and to move on Marseilles." Marseilles was designated, like Lyons, Toulouse, Limoges, and other large towns, as the centre of a provisional government. The day of the final triumph in Paris those governments would have been united into one.

At the first tidings received from Paris the whole of the department of the Lower Alps was in motion. The tocsin was rung in the villages, and in a few hours the insurgent columns, with their

arms upon them, mustered at the appointed spots. Their arms consisted, as elsewhere, of muskets, pistols, hatchets, sabres, scythes, pitchforks, and pikes, besides all the implements used by the agricultural labourer. Nor were the baskets and bags forgotten. It is those necessary adjuncts to rapine that ever betray the real nature of demagogical heroism.

At Forcalquier a watchmaker named Escoffier assumes the command of the insurrection. At Manosque the member for the council-general of the canton, citizen Buisson, places himself at the head of the bands.

The ball is opened at Forcalquier. The town is without troops and unable to defend itself. Two thousand rebels invade it, and range themselves in battle array in front of the sub-prefecture. The sub-prefect, M. Paillard, is summoned to surrender. He energetically resists, and protests against the violence offered to the representative of the Government. He stoutly and loudly orders the few gendarmes around him to resist, but he is immediately seized upon, a hundred muskets are levelled at his breast, and once more he is summoned to surrender.

"Kill me," he replies, "but I'll never betray my duty; I shall not surrender." A terrible commotion ensues; a stentorian cry of "To death" is heard; but the chief, Escoffier, is moved by so great an instance of bravery; he dashes away the weapons that are about to vomit death, and succeeds for a moment in stopping his desperadoes.

The latter are loth, however, to abandon their prey. They fall upon M. Paillard, whom out of respect for their chief they do not kill; but he is struck and injured, he is almost pounded to death by terrible blows with the butt end of rifles, his clothes are torn to shreds by bayonet thrusts, one of the latter cuts his leg through and through and the blood flows profusely. Still they overlook

nothing; to let him remain at Forcalquier is tantamount to giving him the chance of being rescued by the reaction, hence they'll take him to a village several miles away. Bruised, wounded, more dead than alive, he must march thither. He is dragged off, handcuffed and with a halter round his neck, between two rows of desperadoes, deliberating within his hearing upon the kind of torture they shall inflict on him. At night, on his arrival at some den transformed into a prison for the nonce, in the village of Encontres, M. Paillard, writhing with agony, falls senseless to the ground. Not to have succumbed to the tortures it had endured, the body must have been steeled like the heart. But far from being cast down, his mind dwelt but upon one thing, how to aid the unfortunate people placed under his protection. After a few moments' rest he gathered his remaining strength and succeeded in escaping to go and seek assistance.

Almost at the same moment, Manosque, Sisteron, and other localities were equally occupied by the bands, and from the different points of the department a movement was made upon Digne, which being only defended by a few recruits, fell into the hands of the insurrection. At Digne, as at Sisteron, as at Forcalquier, as everywhere else, the first care of the insurgents was pillage. The public chest was naturally the most amply lined, hence the first to be despoiled.

A note communicated by the Minister of the Interior to the semi-official organs tells the manner in which the brave receiver-general of Digne, Viscount de Matharel, succeeded in saving part of the public moneys.

"At the approach of the insurgent bands who were marching on Digne," says this note, "M. de Matharel had part of his funds (15,000 francs) removed to the barracks, and concealed on his person a similar sum in bank notes. The custodian

of the barracks, which were only guarded by some recruits of the 25th Light Infantry, was compelled, to avoid the disarmament of the latter, to make concessions to the leaders of the insurrection, and to hand over the moneys of the treasury, which they claimed in the name of seven thousand peasants armed to the teeth. A refusal would have necessarily led to enforced contributions, and probably to the pillage and burning of the town.

“The next morning, not satisfied with the funds found at the barracks, the insurgents repaired to the receiver-general’s to insist upon another 14,000 francs, which they said were wanted for the pay of the men.

“Happily M. de Matharel’s presence of mind did not forsake him. He resisted, and not only succeeded in baulking the insurrection of half of his funds, but also in saving the offices and archives of the inland revenue by remaining at his post to the end.”

During several days the whole of the department of the Lower Alps was in the hands of the insurrection, and it wanted nothing less than a regular campaign to regain possession of it. The insurgents, hemmed in on all sides, did not give up their prey without offering battle; they left a certain number of killed on the field. More than eight hundred prisoners, among which were a great many chiefs, fell into the hands of our soldiers.

On the 11th Forcalquier was retaken. On the 12th Digne was relieved. But it was not until the 16th that the columns of mobiles succeeded in dislodging the desperadoes from all their positions. For twelve days the insurrection had occupied and terrorized this unfortunate department.

In the Var the same *ensemble* in the uprising, the same success of the insurgents during the first days, the same robberies, the same pillage, the same murders. At Cuers, where the gendarmes are

massacred with refined cruelty, the body of one is cut in strips, and to the plaudits of his accomplices, one of the chiefs washes his hands in the reeking gore of the victim. There also the army restore order and chastise the criminals; forty insurgents are killed in one encounter, a greater number still are wounded; a great many arrests are made, and the troops succeed in seizing a large supply of arms and ammunition, besides some of the proceeds of those heroic citizens' pilferings.

In the departments of Vaucluse, the Gard, the Drôme, the Ardèche, and others, still the same atrocities are met with.

Assuredly we have dwelt long enough on those days of terror. But we only evoked these shameful recollections to deduce from them two lessons of which no honest man will deny the value. The terrible scenes we have retraced show us both the real aim of the insurrection and the extent of its resources on the 2nd December, and by inference what the latter would have been in 1852.

Its resources! they are shown to us in the departments where the revolutionary organisation was most advanced. When departments, the most thinly populated of France, such as the Lower Alps, the Var, and the Gers, could start at the first signal more than fifteen thousand combatants, one may judge what this army of the Jacquerie would have been if at that date of the 2nd December the struggle had been prolonged for a few days, and a proportionate contingent had sprung to arms in every one of the provinces.

And if instead of a few days the rebels had had before them the six months that separated them from the fatal term of May, 1852, what terrible proportions might not their organisation have taken, what an immense network of fire and steel might not have held the whole of France captive.

As we have said, on the 2nd December the enlist-



ing had scarcely begun, the stock of arms had not been completed, there was but a small store of ammunitions, and very little money to encourage the uprising and pay the combatants.

As for the recruiting, it was made difficult by the constant vigilance of the authorities; it could only be accomplished slowly; the six months afforded by the prospect of 1852 were but barely sufficient for this compromising task.

With regard to arms and ammunition, they could not be stored in great quantities without the risk of seizure; on the other hand, to distribute them so long beforehand was to give the alarm and to expose both the giver and the receiver.

The money could be distributed even less in advance than the munitions. The character of the depositaries permits the suspicion that it would have served for any other purpose than for which it was intended; there would have remained but little of it at the moment it was wanted. Hence the money was still locked up, the arms and ammunition in foreign countries, in the hands of those who were to supply them.

But in 1852 the enlisting would have been complete, the contingents at their posts, the arms and ammunitions in their possession, the money distributed in the provinces as it had been done in Paris, and those terrible hordes of demagoguery, organised and disciplined, would have been ready to offer battle to society and to accomplish the most execrable misdeeds on it. Instead of isolated engagements, which could only lead to partial results, we were threatened with a general uprising, having for its well-considered aim the occupation and subjection of the whole country. The army, instead of being able to concentrate on determined points as it had been on the 2nd December, would have been compelled to spread itself here, there, and everywhere. Instead of the success it had obtained a check would have been possible. Hence

if the resources of the insurrection were sufficiently powerful on certain points on the 2nd December, it will not be denied that in 1852 they would have been a hundredfold more formidable.

And the aim of the insurrection, what was it? Its aim would not have changed. It would have been the same in 1852 that it was on the 2nd December. We have seen this aim in all its naked truth, in its undisguised cynicism.

It would be gratuitously idealising the *Jacquerie* of 1851 to invest it with a political motive. It did not aim at changing the form of government, because it was agreed at any rate that we should continue the Republic; it did not even meditate the substitution of one doctrine for another, for the masses could not have been excited by similar subtleties. One could only incite them by an appeal to their passions and appetites, and this the leaders exclusively strove to do.

Their passions—hatred of the rich, the priest, the gendarme, authority: because the rich possessed what they coveted; because the priest taught religion and morality, the only checks upon social perversion; because the gendarme represented the protection of honest people and property; because the authority was the vigilant watchman of a beneficent power. It is because of this that the rich were arrested and killed, the priests outraged and murdered, the gendarmes butchered and massacred, and that everywhere the magistrates, the depositaries of authority, were fallen upon, insulted, and imprisoned, and rewarded for their courage and fidelity with torture and insult.

Their appetites—the possession of that which belonged to others; and everything being fish that came to their nets, above all, money, they plundered the public chests. What was portable was taken away, wine and spirits especially, though only after having glutted themselves with them on the spot. Their appetites were robbery and pillage; this is

why the women and children came in the wake of the combatants' columns with basket and bag.

Those acts of pillage, carefully premeditated, supply the truest of all the definitions of the motives of the *Jacquerie* in 1851, as of that which was preparing for 1852.

And now let us point out the deductions from those facts.

Louis Napoleon, as Chief of the State, disposed of every means of information with regard to the real situation of the country. The prefects, the public prosecutors, the commanders of the *gendarmerie* had supplied a series of reports in which the plans and the doings of the demagogic party were minutely revealed. The substance of those reports was continually submitted to the Prince. Hence Louis Napoleon knew in their utmost details what were the projects of the demagogues, their present forces, and their possible resources in the future, their aims, and the execrable means by which they would try to attain them.

What duties did the certain knowledge of such formidable perils impose upon the Chief of the State? Was he to stop at the repressive action of the law? But the *Jacquerie* was the hydra with a thousand heads. It is not by ordinary means that similar enterprises can be checked. To simply continue this inefficient pursuit of an obstinate foe was to march unconcernedly to the brink of the precipice which in 1852 would have engulfed the Chief of the State, the Government, and society itself. Was it with such culpable neglect that Louis Napoleon could requite the confidence of the country which on the 10th December had thrown herself in his arms thinking to find a saviour? Did there exist a sufficiently powerful consideration to divert him from the accomplishment of the mission he held from the whole of France. The intrigues of parties, their artful machinations to paralyze the action of the Chief of the State, and to thus

tide over the interval that separated them from the cataclysm of 1852 with the hope of profiting by it, the ingenious obstructions accumulated with the intention of staving off all pacific and constitutional solution, were those the considerations to which to submit, and could they weigh in the balance against the immense interests Louis Napoleon had undertaken to defend ?

Louis Napoleon looked higher : he beheld France crestfallen, threatened by an act of abominable vandalism, and, listening to both the promptings of his heart and his reason, he felt within himself the power and the will to save the country. He made the *Coup d'État*, and the country was saved.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### FOUR MONTHS OF DICTATORSHIP.

The Poll of the 21st December.—How Louis Napoleon used his omnipotence.—The Constitution of 1852.—Attitude of M. de Morny towards the Prince and his own Colleagues.—His Hostility against the Prefect of Police.—Withdrawal of the Minister of the Interior.—The Cabinet disorganised.—The New Ministry of the General Police.—Letter of the Prince-President on the Subject.—Senate and Council of State.—The Decrees relating to the Property of the Orleans Family.—The Decree on the Press.—The Truth with regard to the Press Laws.—Decree on the Council of State and the Legislative Body.—The Rôle reserved to the Senate.—Convocation of the Electoral Colleges.—The Official Candidature.—Difficulties about the Presidency of the Legislative Body.—What the Dictatorship of Louis Napoleon has been to France.

To secure for this great work of the 2nd December its complete result, to give stability to its effects, two forces were necessary : those of the Prince and of the country. We have noticed the way in which the Prince had understood the duty imposed upon him by circumstances, we shall see how the country understood hers.

The people were convoked in their constituencies

on the 20th and 21st December. They were to say whether they approved or condemned the initiative of Louis Napoleon, whether they accepted or rejected the programme of government submitted to them by the proclamation of the 2nd December.

The voting of the 21st December was a downright national rejoicing; each elector contributed his share and gaily went to the poll to deposit the voting paper which would insure his deliverance. The houses were decked with flags, joy and confidence might be read on every one's countenance. The counting of the poll became a mere formality, so well was the splendid result known beforehand. This result still exceeded all hopes, all expectations. The following are its exact figures:—

Votes	.	.	.	.	.	.	8,116,773
Ayes	.	.	.	.	.	.	7,439,216
Noes	.	.	.	.	.	.	640,733

In this number of 640,000 unfavourable votes figured the Legitimist Intransigents, respectable from the very tenacity of their convictions, the militant Orleanists, and some faithful Republicans; but the preponderating element was made up of the insurrectionary forces—from which, however, we must deduct those who were under lock and key and those who had judged it prudent to cross the frontier; finally, those who having been in hot water before, either for theft, bankruptcy, arson, and sundry other demagogic amenities, were debarred from their civil and political rights.

On the 31st December the revising committee brought to the Elysée the result of the plébiscite, the statement of the votes given. In his reply to the speech of M. Baroche, the Prince uttered those memorable words: "France has responded to the loyal appeal I made to her. She has understood that if I waived legality for a moment, it was to enter within the bounds of the law immediately afterwards. . . ."

Those words supplied the key to the great event



France and Europe had been watching. This was the upshot of the obstinate struggle of the majority of the Assembly against the Prince, of the blind resistance of this majority to the oft-reiterated wishes of the country.

We might stop here, for here the events indicated by the title of this book come to an end.

The presidency which Louis Napoleon held by virtue of the election of the 10th December is about to undergo fundamental transformations. We shall successively have the dictatorial presidency, the decennial presidency, which we might term the primitive form of the empire. Without attempting at present the complete history of the two new forms of the power of Louis Napoleon which brought him to the empire, we cannot altogether pass them over without glancing at them, and without noticing the principal events that swayed them. In recalling the concatenation of circumstances that compelled the 2nd December, and in describing its most exciting episodes, we have at the same time shown its consequences and the solid basis it formed for the foundation of a new régime.

If the 2nd December had given Louis Napoleon as great an authority as that wielded by the most powerful sovereigns, it had, however, not made an emperor of him, and this to part of the nation was a matter of deep regret. The 21st December the seven millions of votes that acclaimed Louis Napoleon would, with few exceptions, have restored the Empire;\* but the Prince thought himself bound not to turn the act he had just accomplished to the detriment of the Republican form; he wished to leave it its disinterested character, he wished to

\* Our assumption is amply justified by the vote of the 22nd November, 1852. At that date, we shall see in fact the Empire restored by 7,824,189 suffrages, viz. by 384,913 more votes than Louis Napoleon had obtained on the 21st December for the decennial presidency.

save the country from the vandalism with which she was threatened, and to restore to her the unfettered disposal of her destinies. This he deemed sufficient for his reward and for his glory. In the matter of power Louis Napoleon had only demanded so much as would enable him to replace bastard, illogical, and perilous institutions by institutions that would ensure stability and contribute to the revival of prosperity; he had obstinately refused to profit by his omnipotence to change into a sovereign crown the title of president, of the first magistrate of the Republic.

Anxious to accomplish his task, the Prince had immediately set to work to evolve from the 2nd December all that he had promised and all that the nation expected. The drawing up of the Constitution, the preparation of the fundamental laws, the examination of questions relating to persons, the composition of the great bodies of the State, all this was driven abreast, and the country would have but to wait a short time.

In fact, on the 14th January appeared the most essential manifestation of the powers given to Louis Napoleon. He promulgated the Constitution.

In this Constitution of the 14th January, 1852, might be found the whole of the programme Louis Napoleon had expounded to us at St. Cloud a few weeks previous to the 2nd December. The Constitution of the year VIII. served as a basis to that of 1852. The legislative power was exercised collectively by the President of the Republic, the Senate, and the Legislative Body. A Council of State drew up the projected laws and supported their discussion before the Chamber. The Chief of the State was responsible; the Ministers were in a political sense only responsible to him. The Constitution was subject to revision, and the greater part of the attributes granted to the Executive under its present provisions might in the

future be curtailed without commotion, by the natural working of institutions, in favour of the assemblies—whose rôle was very narrowly defined.

Nor was the country forgotten in this redistribution of constitutional attributes; she elected the members of the Legislative Body, and re-established universal suffrage enabled every citizen in possession of his civil and political rights to participate in the action of the Government.

To say that this Constitution was the personal work of Louis Napoleon would be inexact, but he had inspired it. Some eminent jurists, and principally MM. Troplong, de Meynard and Rouher had been his useful co-workers.

The Constitution of 1852 incontestably answered to the needs of the time; and if some of its provisions were open to discussion, if the control of the Executive's acts was notably hedged round by precautions that made its practice difficult, criticism was to a great extent disarmed by this essential and provident clause of "revision." The revision in fact permitted, by a mechanism most easily set in motion, the introduction to the fundamental pact of such improvements as time and experience would have demonstrated to be useful.

The reception accorded to the Constitution was upon the whole favourable. The intelligent part of the nation having weighed all circumstances, saw in it a prudent equilibrium between the principles of authority and public liberty. The eagerness of Louis Napoleon to lay down his dictatorship could not fail to be regarded by the country as an evidence of his moderation and of his reserve in using the power which events had invested with such considerable proportions at his hands.

As we have said, those grave constitutional questions were not the only ones that claimed the Prince's attention in the first moments of his new power. The question of persons assumed a large

part in his preoccupations. He had to consider the formation of the Senate and the Council of State and the reconstruction of the Ministry, a measure necessary according to his opinion.

The reconstruction of the Ministry had, in fact, from various causes become inevitable. M. de Morny assumed towards the Prince a manner which offended his susceptibilities, and affected with some of his colleagues airs of superiority that only succeeded in hurting them. He wished to sway everything, without possessing by a long way the necessary qualities to so preponderating a rôle. Experience of affairs of State failed him absolutely, and he too often considered his personal interest before that of the public.\*

The Prince was still bent upon M. de Persigny taking a seat in his councils. M. de Morny energetically opposed the wish, and attempted at the same time to remove from the Cabinet those members whose confidence or sympathy he had not been able to win. Above all was he desirous of replacing the Prefect of Police, whose vigilance embarrassed and worried him. This was attempting too much at once, especially for one whose credit was on the wane. It will not be without interest to enter into some explanations on this last point. M. de Morny, who was engaged in numerous business speculations, attached great value to being informed on all things. Hence a Prefect of Police was a precious ally to him. He had easily established an intimacy with my pre-

\* M. Fould, who was endowed with rare faculties of penetration, had made up his mind that the presence of M. de Morny in the Council could not be prolonged. Though having a great affection for him, he foresaw that the nature of his relations with the Prince and with some of his colleagues must necessarily lead to a rupture. He had made himself the pivot, as it were, of a reconstructed cabinet, and communicated his intentions to me; he had even asked me to enter this new combination, and to support his projects at the Elysée. He offered the Prince to give M. de Persigny the portfolio of foreign affairs, and to create a new ministry, that of the general police, to which the Marquis de Turgot would be called.

decessor, M. Carlier, and he wished the same state of things to continue. At my accession to the prefecture I had been the object of numerous advances on his part. Invitation upon invitation had been sent to me. From various causes I had judged it prudent not to accept them. A natural coolness had succeeded to this interested display of good feeling, and the former had been increased by certain dissensions that sprang up between us during the days of December. Shortly after those days, complying with a pressing request of the Prince, I had been compelled to signalise to him the vast profits realised at the Stock Exchange during those events by some great speculators *designated by himself*. M. de Morny got wind of my investigations, and from that moment his coolness manifestly increased. He had recourse to every means in order to alienate the confidence of the Chief of the State from me, but the enterprise was beset with danger, as he himself soon perceived. M. Carlier was his accomplice and his agent in this shady bit of business. The former Prefect of Police was charged by him to have me watched. My acts, my words, my every step were reported, commented on, and belied. Several reports had been handed to the Prince; they were given as the absolutely spontaneous expression of the criticism and complaints of one of my subordinates at the Prefecture of Police. This surveillance, or rather this system of espionage, had been revealed to me by a very devoted agent. I had informed the Prince of these doings, and noticed the unfavourable impression produced against the authors. It seemed to me not altogether out of place to furnish him one day with the material proofs of those intrigues. I was enabled to procure the very minutes of the reports addressed to the Prince. They were in the handwriting of M. Carlier; and to make the evidence more crushing still, one of them had been corrected by M. de



Morny himself. Provided with those pieces, I had been to see the Minister of the Interior, and had reproached him with his want of confidence in his Prefect of Police. If people could but have heard the protestations against such a supposition with which my words were met! I waited till M. de Morny had finished, then I took from my pocket-book the minutes of the reports, and particularly the one corrected by himself, and showed them to him. This of course put an end to our interview, and taking my leave I proceeded to the Elysée. I handed to the Chief of the State the draft copies of M. Carlier's reports and my resignation at the same time. I was bent upon giving the Chief of the State his full freedom of choosing, between two men whose presence in the same Government became henceforth impossible, the one who still commanded his confidence and sympathy. The mind of the Prince with regard to M. de Morny had been made up for some days. He did not even wait for the additional explanations I offered to submit to him to tell me his decision. "I had decided," he said to me, "to break with M. de Morny, I was to tell him so shortly, but this incident necessarily accelerates the solution. Take back your resignation and remain here."

In fact, when I left the Prince's room I remained in the adjacent one, talking to M. Mocquart. Half an hour later I beheld M. de Morny enter the Prince's room in his turn; he soon came out again, and then he was no longer Minister of the Interior. M. de Morny told M. Mocquart and myself that, fatigued and desirous of resuming his freedom to attend to his own business, he had come to ask the Prince to find him a successor.

This incident happened on the 14th of January, at ten o'clock in the morning. We have given its summary narrative with the documents before us.

So that everything should be said on the first causes of M. de Morny's retirement, we must pene-

trate still further into his intimate relations with Louis Napoleon. M. de Morny was of opinion that after the 2nd December he was entitled to a reward of an exceptional nature. He expected to receive it immediately after the events; he indulged dreams that could scarcely be realised. Days went by and nothing came. His impatience took the shape of a visible discontent. He at last resolved to acquaint the Chief of the State with his pretensions; some were exaggerated, and others were misplaced. The latter were of such a nature as to absolutely debar me from entering into further details upon them.\* Those which the Prince had judged exaggerated were dragged from his good nature in the end by dint of worrying. M. de Morny was at first raised to the dignity of Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour, and received later on the title of Duke. But that he should have preferred his request for those two favours immediately after the 2nd December had irritated the Prince, and contributed to breed the liveliest desire to break with his Minister.

If we had still been under a parliamentary government it might have been said that the retreat of one member of the Government definitely reopened the ministerial crisis which for the last few days had been latent. The new régime did not admit of a ministerial crisis properly speaking. Reciprocal responsibility, the principle by which the grievance of one or the other Minister is forced upon them all, existed no longer. A Minister might retire without his colleagues being in duty bound to associate themselves with his fate. If they had done so, they would not only have protested against, but nullified the institutions

\* M. Granier de Cassagnac, in his "*Souvenirs du Second Empire*," gives some details as exact as interesting upon the pretensions of M. de Morny. He reveals the true cause of the very natural coolness of the Prince towards M. de Morny, a coolness from which the Prince never departed except to avoid incessant worrying.

of which they were the foremost representatives. M. de Morny's withdrawal—his resignation as he chose to call it—would therefore have left the entire Ministry at its post, if other causes had not thrown in its midst more deep-rooted germs of dislocation.

In fact, but few days after the resignation of M. de Morny—whom the Prince had not deemed it necessary to replace immediately, seeing that he contemplated an imminent reconstruction of the Cabinet—the rumour spread that the President proposed to restore to the State, by a simple decree, such of the property of the Orleans family as had lapsed to it as inheritance from King Louis Philippe I. Several of the Ministers loudly blamed this resolution. They considered it an impolitic and unjust act. They entertained towards the house of Orleans feelings of sympathy which did not seem to permit to them a complicity, however indirect, in this measure.

And in saying indirect, we consecrate the doctrine of the non-reciprocity of responsibility of the Ministers. The responsibility of the measure would only devolve upon the Minister who signed the decree. The other members of the Cabinet might blame the resolution of the Prince, they might contest and oppose it to the last hour, they might even endeavour after its accomplishment to lessen its effects, but to protest by a collective resignation would have been, we repeat, an inopportune reminiscence of the parliamentary past, it would have been substituting the ancient doctrine of the responsibility of Ministers for the provisions of paragraph 2 of the constitutional bases consecrated by the plébiscite of the 21st December, 1851.

The men who, as it were, had sucked parliamentary institutions with their mothers' milk could not easily reconcile themselves to this new doctrine. The announcement by the Prince to his Ministers of his decision with regard to the estates of the Orleans family provoked this time a downright

crisis. Those who blamed the measure, and did not deem themselves justified to bear a share in it by reason of their antecedents, told the Prince of their wish to withdraw. Those who without approving the decree did not deem themselves linked by a reciprocity of responsibility with the Minister who was to countersign and assume the responsibility of it, did not tender their resignation. Hence the Cabinet found itself divided into two camps. Three Ministers withdrew—MM. Fould, Rouher, and Magne; five—MM. Marquis de Turgot, Ducos, General de Saint-Arnaud, Fourtoul, and Lefèvre-Durufilé—consented at the repeated request of the Prince to remain at their posts, while condemning the resolution.

To M. de Morny this ministerial crisis had been a coincidence favourable to his vanity. Instead of retiring from the Ministry alone, he drowned his withdrawal in that of his colleagues; and the Prince having divulged his interview of the 14th January with M. de Morny to no one, the latter did not fail to say that, like his colleagues, he withdrew on the question of the Orleans property. This error, of small importance assuredly, has become the version most generally accepted.\* Let us add, however, that M. de Morny blamed the decrees relating to the Orleans family, and that an explanation on the subject had taken place between himself and the Prince.

On the 16th January the Prince, without having spoken of it to any one save to MM. de Saint-Arnaud, de Persigny, and to me, had decided upon

\* MM. Granier de Cassagnac and Paul de Cassagnac, in their "*His-oire populaire de l'Empereur Napoléon III.*" (vol. i. p. 369), speak of the ministerial crisis caused by what is termed the decree on the Orleans property. They point out those of the Ministers who retired on this question, and with regard to M. de Morny they add:—"M. de Morny, Minister of the Interior, equally withdrew, but from motives other than these, though the contrary has been stated. His substitution had been decided on several days before the decrees." On this, as well as on all other circumstances, MM. de Cassagnac were very accurately informed.

the following combination. MM. de Casabianca at the Ministry of State; de Saint-Arnaud, War; de Persigny, Foreign Affairs; de Maupas, Interior; Marquis de Turgot, General Police; Marquis d'Audiffret, Finances; Ducos, Marine; Fourtoul, Public Education; Lefèvre-Durufié, Agriculture, Commerce, and Public Works.

This combination was in part known to the political world, and surprise was felt as day after day passed without it appearing in the *Moniteur*. Various causes prevented this appearance. M. Ducos insisted upon retiring. The Prince was equally anxious to retain the valuable services of this eminent man. The Marquis de Turgot only consented to remain in the Council on the condition of keeping his portfolio for Foreign Affairs, and the Marquis d'Audiffret imposed conditions which the Prince would not accept. To remove these difficulties a few days had been necessary. The understanding was at last complete. M. Persigny abandoned, though not without some show of temper, the portfolio of Foreign Affairs, and he obtained that of the Interior instead. The Ministry of General Police was then offered to me, and I did not think it right to refuse the Prince this sacrifice of my preferences for the portfolio of the Interior. As for M. d'Audiffret it was impossible to overcome his resistance, and M. Bineau was selected for the portfolio of Finances. The *Moniteur* of the 22nd January published the decree of the nomination of the new Ministers. The Cabinet was composed as follows:—

MM. COUNT DE CASABIANCA, Minister of State.

'ABBATUCCI, Minister of Justice and Public Worship.

MARQUIS DE TURGOT, Minister for Foreign Affairs.

DE SAINT-ARNAUD, Minister for War.

DUCOS, Minister of Marine and the Colonies.



MM. DE PERSIGNY, Minister of the Interior.  
DE MAUPAS, Minister of General Police.  
LEFÈVRE-DURUFLÉ, Minister of Public  
Works, of Agriculture and Commerce.  
FOURTOUL, Minister of Public Education.  
BINEAU, Minister of Finances.

Two new Ministries had been created, the Ministry of State and that of the General Police.

Were they necessary? The future has not completely proved it. We, MM. Abbatucci, Fould, and I, had combated this twofold innovation; but the Prince had a very natural reverence for all the institutions of the First Empire. Those two Ministries existed under Napoleon I. This was the principal cause of their re-establishment.

The functions of the Minister of State were determined in the following manner by the decree of the 22nd January:—

The communications of the Government with the State. The correspondence of the President with the various Ministers. The countersigning of the decrees nominating the Ministers, the Presidents of the Senate and of the Legislative Body, nominating the Senators and the concessionaries of donations (pensioners on the civil list, nominating the members of the Council of State. The countersigning of the decrees of the President in conformity with the articles 24, 28, 31, 46, and 54 of the Constitution, and of those concerning matters not especially within the attributes of another special ministerial department. The editing and recording of the minutes of the Council of Ministers. The administration of the national domains and manufactories.

As for the Ministry of General Police, the Prince attached an altogether special importance to it; he considered it one of the essential mechanisms of his Government; and to make this understood he had wished to define this mechanism himself. He did so in a letter addressed to me on the 30th

January. This letter was a veritable programme. It will not be without interest therefore to recall it here.\*

“MONSIEUR LE MINISTRE,

“At the moment when you are about to organise the Ministry of the General Police, I wish to imbue you with the dominant idea that caused me to judge this organisation necessary, so that henceforth you may be impressed with the spirit in which it should be carried out.

“At present, though responsible, the President of the Republic can only gain an imperfect knowledge of the general state of the country by the means at his disposal. He ignores how the various mechanisms of the administration work, whether the measures decided upon with his Ministers are executed in accordance with the spirit that dictated them, if public opinion approves or disapproves of the acts of his Government. Finally he ignores the abuses to suppress, the omissions to provide against, the indispensable improvements to introduce. In fact to enlighten him he has only the information, often contradictory, always insufficient, of the various Ministers.

“The administrations of War and of Finances have a control; the Ministry of the Interior, which is the only political one, has none. When an order is transmitted to a prefect, we have to take the word of this prefect himself as to whether its execution has been what it should be. Suppose that conflicts should arise between the different authorities, how are we to determine, from information incomplete and necessarily one-sided, who is in the right? How are we to reprimand or to reward with any degree of justice?

“On the other side, surveillance being too localised, enclosed within too narrow a sphere, exercised by agents independent of one another

\* *Moniteur Universel* of the 31st January, 1852.

and without direct communication with the central power, crime and conspiracy cannot be prevented or suppressed in an efficient manner.

“In the actual state of things there exists no organisation that can clearly and with dispatch report upon the condition of public opinion, because there is no organisation which possesses this exclusive mission, which disposes of means to carry it out, which, standing outside all political questions, has the power to be impartial, to speak the truth and to transmit it. To supply this shortcoming we must revive the decree of the 21st Messidor of the year XII. ; namely, remove from the Ministry of the Interior, occupied with too many various matters, the direction of the general police, and give it a simple and uniform organisation obeying one single impulse.

“To this effect it will be sufficient to create seven or eight general inspectors, whose respective functions will extend to several military divisions, and who will correspond directly with the Minister. They will have under them special inspectors who themselves will be in constant communication with the commissaries of towns, who at present, scattered as they are over the whole of France, are nothing but the agents of the municipalities. In this way the Minister of Police will be at the head of those functionaries hierarchically subordinated to one another, but who will none the less owe obedience to the civil authorities from the mayor to the prefect. The Minister will survey everything while administering nothing ; he will not diminish the authority of the prefect, because he will not share it ; his agents will support the various authorities, and enlighten first them, and the Government afterwards, on all that concerns the public service.

“No doubt in a condition of affairs only representing privileged interests a similar Ministry might inspire apprehensions ; but under a Government whose mission it is to satisfy general interests

it can have nothing but what is reassuring to every one.

“Hence this will not be a Ministry of provocation and persecution, endeavouring to meddle with family secrets, seeing harm everywhere for the pleasure of pointing it out, interfering with the relations of citizens between one another, and introducing suspicion and fear everywhere; it will, on the contrary, be an essentially protective institution, specially animated by a spirit of benevolence and moderation which does not exclude firmness; it will only intimidate the enemies of society. To sum up: its rôle is to watch in the interests of humanity, of public security, of general utility, of the introduction of improvements, of the suppression of abuses, every part of the public service. In that way it will provide the Government with the means of doing good.

“It is to you, M. le Ministre, who gave me so many proofs of your discernment, of courage in critical moments, and of devotion, that I confide this noble and important mission to constantly inform me of the truth, which is too often intentionally kept from the knowledge of the supreme power.

“Pray accept, &c.,

“LOUIS NAPOLEON.”

If this last phrase, which alluded intentionally to the services I had been able to render during the difficult days of December, contained a flattering testimony, it had another aim besides; it was intended as, and it was, a categorical answer to the attacks whose object I had been on the part of M. de Morny.

Reading this letter to me himself previous to sending it to the *Moniteur*, the Prince added words of lively gratitude and precious gratulations.

But is truth ever long in favour close to a throne? This mission so expressly confided to me, “to

constantly inform the Chief of the State of the truth, which is too often intentionally kept from the knowledge of the supreme power," this mission I faithfully performed it up to the last hour of my difficult ministry, full well weighing all the while the exceptional personal perils to which this absolute sincerity exposed me. I am as far from regretting the loss of favour that befell me as I am from murmuring at the removal brought upon me by my candour. The human heart, however high it may be placed, and there perhaps more than elsewhere, is subject to the eternal laws that govern humanity. I knew it when I accepted the portfolio of General Police. The subsequent proceedings of the Prince with regard to myself only confirmed the knowledge.

One sentence above all in this letter was calculated to arouse the storm ; it was the one : "The administrations of War and of Finances have a control ; the Ministry of the Interior, which is the only political one, has none." To give M. de Persigny, a restless and domineering spirit, an overseer in so peremptory a manner, was to provoke his susceptibilities. They were not long behind, and from the friend he had been to me he soon became a mistrusting colleague, but too disposed to raise contention where the interest of the State should have prescribed good understanding.

The first question submitted to the new Cabinet was that of the composition of the two great bodies of the State, the Senate and the Council of State. For the last three years the Prince had felt the serious drawback of having for auxiliaries men who were too closely bound up with the deposed royal families, and who gave the new Government but a lukewarm support. He wished to surround himself with adherents convinced of his power, having faith in its duration, and resolved to burn their vessels. To this sentiment more than to anything else must be attributed the severe measure with regard to the Orleans property.



In fact, the great bodies of the State being constituted on the very morrow of the decrees, it became a matter of difficulty with the Orleanists, unless they broke for good with their party, to accept any high dignity at the hands of the régime that had just struck their princes. Consequently a certain number among them who had solicited the honour of belonging to the Senate and the Council of State withdrew their candidature. The Prince's end was gained. He was above all anxious to keep away the Orleanist element, and he almost completely succeeded.

The 26th January the *Moniteur* published the list of the Senators; it also gave the composition of the Council of State; and a few days later, the 2nd February, it published the decree providing for the election of the members of the Legislative Body. A decree bearing the same date convoked the electoral colleges for the 29th of the same month.

The *Moniteur* had likewise published the regrettable decrees with reference to the property of the Orleans family. They were of two different characters :—

“The members of the Orleans family, their husbands, wives, and descendants, shall be debarred from the possession of all real and personal property whatsoever in France (*aucuns meubles et immeubles en France*).<sup>\*</sup> They shall be required to sell in a final manner all their property within the territory of the Republic.”

The preambles were conceived as follows :—

“Considering that all the Governments which have succeeded each other have judged it necessary to compel the family that ceased to reign to sell

<sup>\*</sup> The word *meuble*, which ordinarily means furniture, signifies personal property when employed in context with the words *biens immeubles* or simply *immeuble*. I must appeal to the reader's leniency throughout the translation of this decree, which could only be rendered into technical English by a conveyancer acquainted with both languages. I shall, however, try to render the meaning as clear as possible.—*Trans.*

the real and personal property they possessed in France.

"That by virtue of this, the 12th January, 1816, Louis XVIII. compelled the members of the family of the Emperor Napoleon to sell their personal estates within a delay of six months, and that the 10th April, 1832, Louis Philippe decreed the same with regard to the elder branch of the Bourbons.

"Considering that public interest and order require such measures, that to-day more than ever considerations of high political interest render it imperative to diminish the influence which the possession of nearly three hundred millions of francs' worth of landed property in France gives to the Orleans family. . . ."

The second of these decrees ran thus :—

"Article I. The real and personal property comprised in the deed of gift executed by King Louis Philippe on the 7th August, 1830, are restored to the State domains. The State remains charged with the payment of the debts of the civil list of the last dynasty."

The principal preambles were as follows :—

"Considering that without wishing to infringe the right of property in the persons of the princes of the Orleans family, the President of the Republic would not justify the confidence of the French nation if he allowed estates that should belong to the nation to be alienated from the State domain.

"Considering that by virtue of the ancient French common law, maintained by the decree of the 21st September, 1790, and by the law of the 8th November, 1814, all the property belonging to princes at the time of their advent to the throne, were instantly incorporated with the Crown domains.

"That in accordance with this, the decree of the 21st September, 1790, likewise the law of the 29th November, 1814, provide that: 'The private estates

of those princes who accede to the throne, and those of which they were possessed during their reign by virtue of what title soever, are lawfully and instantly incorporated with the domains of the nation, and that this incorporation is perpetual and irrevocable.'

"That the consecration of this principle dates back to far distant periods of the monarchy; that among others the example of Henri IV. might be cited. This prince having wished to prevent by letters patent of the 15th April, 1590, the incorporation of his estates with the Crown domains, the Parliament of Paris, by an Act dated the 15th July, 1590, refused to register those letters patent, and Henri IV. later on approving of this firmness, promulgated in the month of July, 1601, an edict revoking his first letters patent.

"Considering that this fundamental rule of the monarchy has been applied under the reigns of Louis XVIII. and Charles IX. and been reproduced in the law of the 15th January, 1825; that no legislative Act had revoked it at the date of the 9th August, 1830, when Louis Philippe accepted the crown; that therefore, by the sole fact of this acceptance, all the property he possessed at this period became the inalienable property of the State.

"Considering that the universal deed of gift with reservation of usufruct executed by Louis Philippe in favour of his children, but excluding his eldest son, on the 7th August, 1830, hence on the very day when the crown had been conferred upon him, and before his acceptance of the same, which took place on the 9th of that month, was solely intended to prevent the incorporation with the State domains of the considerable property possessed by the prince called to the throne, &c. &c. . . ."

No question of the times has given rise to more passionate discussions than did the one of the decrees. Truth compels us to state that they produced

a most unfavourable impression. Public opinion did not stop to inquire the lawfulness of the measures, it considered them rather as the expression of exaggerated fears, and above all did it refuse to perceive the political aim of which we spoke above. This deplorable effect had been foreseen among the Prince's surroundings. Warnings had not been wanting. Several members of his family had most earnestly entreated him not to carry out his design. Several of his Ministers had added their supplications; we had done everything to divert the Prince from the path into which some of his dangerous councillors enveigled him. Of the latter M. de Persigny was the most important and the most headstrong. If he could speak to-day, he would not deny that he was the promoter of the idea and the most tenacious guardian of its execution.

The emotion caused by this prejudicial measure was long in subsiding. The publication of the decree dealing with the press laws provided the first diversion to it. It had been impatiently expected. The few notions which those interested in their working had been able to gather beforehand provoked some violent comments.

It is because the legislation which regulates the press laws cannot fail indeed to exercise a considerable influence in the State. Public order, peace, and stability require, in order to be lasting, a law on the press that shall be adapted to the circumstances and temper of the country in which it is to operate. Never is the truth more difficult to arrive at for the legislator than in this matter.

It would be committing an error indeed to pretend that there can be in the matter of the press an absolute truth, an abstract doctrine capable of being equally applied to the State institutions of every country and of every period, with the reservation of some slight modifications. Only those minds absolutely blinded by an exclusive preference would

care to contest the justice of this assertion. It is in this way that both the systematic partisans of absolute liberty and those of discretionary power are equally misled. Likewise are mistaken the defenders of the bastard expedient which is neither liberty nor check, when they expect to find in a system of repression assuming different forms, the imaginary guarantees which they are simple-minded enough to believe sufficiently powerful to restrain liberty within such limits as their illusion has mapped out.

But in default of the absolute truth one may at least find the comparative truth. It consists in respecting certain correlatives which are like certain axioms, and from which the legislator cannot depart with impunity. Those correlatives are the fundamental character of a nation, her political morals, the grave and recent circumstances she has passed through, and, finally, the nature of her institutions, which must become their essential elements and determine their bases.

The absence of all special legislation, the unfettered use of common right, and the complete liberty of the press, in order to be a benefit and never to become a peril, must be applied to a nation where the very form of government be not exposed to competitions, to attacks, where the search after political progress, moral and material, be the sole aim of the public mind, where internal peace is a heritage which it is the interest of every citizen to defend. Restrained within such limits, controversy becomes a fruitful stimulant to individual and collective initiative, a torch which sheds on the public weal a lustre that propagates, on public woe a light that paralyzes and condemns it. In that way the press becomes the most powerful motor of civilisation, it becomes the daily nourishment that sustains the forward movement and the life of a nation. Among such a nation the laws must emancipate the press from all im-



pediment, and favour the free expansion of its beneficent action.

If on the contrary it be a question of a State where the form of the government itself be the object of the militant contention of parties, where the idea of overthrow is never abandoned save by him who triumphs, where defeat is only supported by the hope of a near revenge—in such a state, strife being the rule, conflict and revolution the periodical issues of these relentless rivalries, everything that can feed the conflagration of discord becomes a peril, a constitutional inconsistency. The press under those conditions becomes only an instrument of demolition and ruin, a most formidable weapon in the hands of the assailants, the torch that kindles the flames in the hour of danger. The good that some of its organs may accomplish is stifled by the vast emanation of evil one must expect from those who contend.

To avert a similar peril is not only a right, but a duty, for the government which has in its hands the custody and the responsibility of public tranquillity and the prosperity of the country. Circumstances alone can determine the correlative that must exist in such a State. In the days of crisis and danger the press must resign itself to a kind of political silence, to the momentary suspension of its franchise; the resumption of tranquillity must be to it the resumption of a proportional liberty, which may be increased by degrees according to the pledges of good behaviour it gives; but it cannot expect from the public power, the existence of which it ever threatens, that it should disarm, while leaving its enemy to confront it fully armed and ready to renew the struggle.

This would be a way of balancing the chances which no government could commit with impunity. Hence in such a State it is but just to assume that discretionary power must be the principle, and

that the derogations from it must still remain subject to beneficent rules. The emancipation of the press must only be initiated in the beginning in a tentative form and as a concession, without the abdication of the right to return to the fundamental principle in the event of abuse and peril.

It is in this mode of regulating this limited freedom that some minds, opposed above all to the dangers of arbitrary power, have tried to discover the basis of a mixed system—that of right tempered solely by judiciary repression. With them the sacrifice to liberty can only be made on condition of seeing the latter replaced by a guarantee founded in some cases on the independence of the magistracy, in others on that of the jury, to the express exclusion of all administrative interference.

Is it possible that there are still to be found political men who found a lasting hope on the effects of repression exclusively confined, as far as the press is concerned, to the tribunal or the jury? If deep reflection and the careful study of these grave problems were not sufficient to demonstrate the absolute inanity of the verdicts given by the one or the other of these two jurisdictions, would not our own experience be enough to convince us of their impotency and danger. Among the governments who have succeeded each other for more than half a century on the storm-tossed soil, those who have wished to give the press every appearance of liberty have only dared do so by hedging their generosity with numerous reservations and stipulations virtually leading to judiciary repression. This judiciary repression has proved to each of them an inefficient check, a weapon which never failed to injure him who wished to serve himself of it.

It is thus that the Restoration successively appealed to the ordinary tribunals, and later on to the jury, without obtaining from either of these two bodies the protection it expected from them.

It is thus that the Government of July, who had instituted the jury as a guarantee of the liberty of the press, but soon recognised its impotency, tried in vain to struggle against the exactions which it had been rash enough to inscribe on its very charter. The press outran and baulked its prevision, it foiled its most vigorous measures. It is thus that the Republic of 1848, which rewarded revolutionary journalism with the liberty of the press, did not fail to guard itself ere long against its encroachments by the application of the restrictive laws, by its appeal to the right of repression confided to the jury.

At neither of those periods did repression prove either a guarantee or a check. Public prosecution never accomplished anything save the discrediting of the public power, the compromising of the jurisdiction appealed to, the spreading of the doctrines this prosecution pretended to assail. It simply magnified and strengthened the individuals or parties it wanted to reduce.\*

The laws of the 17th and 26th May, 9th June, 1819; 17th, 25th March, 1822; 18th July, 1828, the charter of 1830, the law of the 9th September, 1835, the Constitution of 1848, the laws of the 27th July, 1849, and the 16th July, 1850, are simply so many revelations of the impotency of the legislator. The forces he pretends to regulate overwhelm and dominate him.

Hence, at the moment when we had to provide for the regulation of the press in 1852, were not

\* But for the fear of developing too extensively this question of the press, on which we may be reproached with having dwelt too long already, we might in support of our opinion have reproduced here some conclusive citations. We should have borrowed them from a remarkable work of M. Ferdinand Giraudeau, in which, with an unimpeachable authority, he examines the various systems of jurisdiction that have been tried in the matter of the liberty of the press. The book is deeply interesting, and those of our readers who attach to the question the importance it possesses will thank us for having called their attention to "*La Presse périodique de 1789 à 1867*," by M. Ferdinand Giraudeau. (Dentu, Editeur.)

we bound to conclude, from the powerless attempts of the previous laws to maintain the liberty of the press within prudent bounds, that this liberty was doomed to disappear from those States subject to the perilous trials of the upheavings of parties, and that at any rate this liberty could only be allowed to exist on sufferance, that it should never be certain of its morrow? Were we not bound to conclude that for a long while to come this latter and harsh condition was the only practicable rule for France? Might we not be allowed, on the other hand, to seek by means of new methods new guarantees both for the Government and the press itself? Might not the insufficiency of the judiciary repression be usefully replaced in certain cases by administrative repression, and might not the very preventive action of the Government be usefully exercised to diminish the occasion for indulging harsh measures?

The decretal law of the 17th February, 1852, upon which the Prince had decided, may justly be called arbitrary as long as it remained within the hands of a Government without effectual control. But under a monarchy with representative institutions does not this very law supply a basis to which the press should not object, seeing that its application remains like that of all other laws subject to the protecting watchfulness of the Assemblies? Because while it arms the public power with the right of suppression necessary for the protection of society against the abuse of liberty, it equally promises by the ever possible non-application of its repressive provisions the fullest liberty for the time when the tranquillity of the public mind and the prudence of the press render such liberty inoffensive.

Undoubtedly in the strictest acceptation of the term a system similar to that of the decretal law of 1852 does not confer a right on the press. But if a latitude guaranteed by the surveillance of

the constituted power may at a certain moment become its synonym, would the press really have cause to regret the sacrifice it makes to public interest? Are there not in every constituted society rights superior to those which the press can claim for itself? The first of those rights, and to which all others must yield, is it not the right society has to protect itself against any enterprise that may endanger its existence or security? Should not the press be the first to give the example of respect due to this right primordial amongst all?

Besides, in the application of this system might not the press consider itself the arbiter of its own destinies? Let it remain what it should be, the counsellor, the enlightened stimulator of the public power, the vigilant guardian of the interests of the country, the supporter of just and fruitful ideas, and its liberty will grow in proportion to the services it renders and to the countenance it obtains from public opinion. Let it, on the other hand, become aggressively and unjustly fault-finding, the tool of passions, inimical to public tranquillity, let the fundamental principles of society begin to regard it as an adversary, let it become the instrument of discord and dissolution, and assuredly it will only have itself to thank for the measures of repression it incurs.

In summing up those rapid surveys, may we not safely maintain that in default of absolute truth, so difficult to find in the matter of press laws, relative truth may, without much effort, be determined according to the State in which this truth has to be applied, according to their political and moral conditions, and the nature of their institutions. If we put aside the form of absolute government as incompatible with any durable and fixed right of liberty, and under which the press can expect no more than a certain equity under an arbitrary rule without control, we shall be able to deter-



mine the formula of the relative truth in press matters.

Absolute liberty, complete absence of repression other than that of common law, such is the favour to which the press may logically aspire in a State where the form of government is subject to no aggression, to no attempt at overthrow, where the internal peace is safe against all menace.

Varying liberty, starting by being subject to legislation like that of 1852, exercised under the control of the Assemblies by an irremovable and responsible power, such is the sole condition that can be accorded to the press in a country where the various parties, ever ready to renew the struggle, constitute an incessant danger to public tranquillity and the security of the established government.

Such a condition, which allows the gradual progress of the press to complete liberty without commotion and without danger to public security, is it not a hundred times preferable, as far as the press itself is concerned, to ephemeral legislation, to the deceptive concessions wrested from a power which may take back by the exercise of legal repression that part of its privileges which it has been compelled to abandon?

If after this we seek to deduce from these doctrines the conditions which in our days should be accorded to the press in France, likewise the political system that may secure for it the greatest amount of liberty that shall not be hurtful, have we not the right to maintain that the latter formula constitutes to us the relative truth, viz. "a varying liberty," the legislation of 1852 applied under the guarantee of representative institutions firmly established?

Perhaps the days of appeasement may come, and Heaven grant it, when the experiment of complete liberty may be attempted yet. But if those who believe themselves sufficiently strong to risk such a formidable experiment desire to remain within the

limits of prudence and foresight, let them carefully reserve to themselves the right of returning at the first appearance of danger to this form of varying liberty which we have defined above.

Let us add that we have only spoken here of a legislation to be applied by a monarchical régime. We are not concerned with the venturesome experiments of republican governments. With the Republic the press has experienced all extremes, the arbitrary and the licentious; and if it be in the enjoyment of liberty for a moment, though still cramped by judiciary repression, it must know that for it, as for all, a like government has no future.

At this date of 1852, while France was still under the excitement of the agitation and the strife of parties, we could not entertain this generous experiment of liberty with regard to the press. The situation demanded provident and restrictive measures. The utmost that could be accorded to the press was a legislation that might lend itself one day to the formula we have already given, "varying liberty with the guarantee of representative institutions." The decree of the 17th February, 1852, contained this measure of liberty.

How many trials and calamities would the Empire have saved itself if, instead of yielding to the pernicious counsels of a few ambitious and unconscionable worshippers of liberty, it had prudently entrenched itself within this decree of 1852? It might according to its own pleasure have modified its rigours, enlarged its concessions. That is what it did at first, and there its surrender should have stopped. In this way it would have succeeded in attaining without injury to the public welfare the period when the Assemblies, assuming a more important function in the State, would have applied the doctrine explained above in a manner such as to give the press the true amount of liberty it might reasonably expect.

The general arrangement of the law was contained in some essential provisions.

The preliminary authorisation of the Government was required for every journal or periodical publication professedly dealing with politics or social economy. It was subject to the Stamp Act. A certain sum of caution money was to be deposited. The Government had the right to rectify, by means of communications to be inserted at the head of the paper, the false news and comments it considered inexact. The jurisdiction which was to try the derelictions and offences was that of the correctional police-courts. (There is no jury in the correctional police-courts, they consist of a judge and two assessors.—*Trans.*)

A journal might be suspended by virtue of a ministerial decision, even if it had never been fined or condemned, but only after two warnings stating the cause of the same, and only for a period not exceeding two months. A journal might be suppressed, either after a judiciary or administrative suspension, or by virtue of an enactment in the interest of public security, but only by a special decree of the President of the Republic, published in the *Bulletin des Lois* (equivalent to our *London Gazette*). In those provisions lay the arbitrary portion of the decree, and in the application of the latter two lay the opportunity for the severity or the toleration of the Government, according to the times and social necessities.

If we have dwelt rather long on this question of the liberty of the press, we have only given it the space proportioned to its importance. Those who have attentively watched the march of events during the latter years of the Empire may have become aware that it is through having depreciated the principles summarily exposed above, that the Government became engaged in the most inextricable complications. We have just pointed out what prudence, logic, and the interest

of the country demanded. It is, alas, but too well known how rashly the Government engaged in venturesome experiments with regard to the press, how it exposed itself to the most formidable perils.

At the same time that the *Moniteur* published the decretal law on the press, the Government promulgated the decrees providing for the organisation of the Council of State and the election of the deputies. The Council of State became one of the most essential wheels in the mechanism of the Government. Article I. of the decree summed up its functions as follows :—

“The Council of State, under the direction of the President of the Republic, draws up the projects of laws and supports their discussion before the Legislative Body.

“It proposes the decrees that determine: 1, the administrative questions the investigation of which devolves upon it by virtue of its own rules, or in pursuance of legislative provisions; 2, the pending administrative disputes; 3, all conflict arising between the administrative authorities and the judiciary with regard to their respective attributes. It is necessarily called upon to advise upon all the decrees regulating public administration or such as may be added to these regulations.

“It deliberates upon the measures of high administrative police, with regard to the functionaries whose acts are submitted to its cognisance by the President of the Republic.

“Finally, it advises upon all questions submitted to it by the President of the Republic or the Ministers.”

In comparison with the past the part allotted to the Legislative Body was extremely restricted.

There was one deputy to every 35,000 electors. The deputies were elected by universal suffrage, without *scrutin de liste*. They were elected for

six years. The President of the Republic convoked, adjourned, prorogued, and dissolved the Chamber, and named its presidents and vice-presidents. The Legislative Body discussed and voted the projects of laws and the taxation, but the right of amendment was hedged round with restriction. Every amendment adopted by the commission charged with examining a bill, had to be sent to the Council of State without discussion.

In the event of the amendment not being adopted by the Council of State, it could not be submitted to the discussion of the Legislative Body.

And these restrictions notwithstanding, if the Chamber could not make its will felt save in rare and foreseen cases, it could at least warn; and there are warnings it becomes difficult to ignore. If the Legislative Body had wished, it might, even with the curtailed attributes imposed upon it at the beginning, have exercised an efficient control on certain acts of the public power and on the general march of affairs, and have taken an important place in the State. If this was not the case, if its rôle became effaced, if its intervention became without authority, the men rather than the institution were to blame for it. An exaggerated submission to the wishes of the Chief of the State often replaced independence and firmness of mind.

If the Legislative Body was called to exercise but an insufficient control, it was assuredly not the Senate that could take the initiative of warning. Its attributes were considerable in some matters and too restricted in others. It is thus that without having the right of discussing clause by clause the laws submitted to it, its legislative rôle was confined to the right of opposing the promulgation of:—

1. Such laws as shall be contrary to or calculated to injure the Constitution, religion, liberty of



worship, the liberty of the subject, the equality of the people before the law, the rights of property, and the principle of the removability of the magistracy.

2. Such as might compromise the defence of the territory.

The Senate might, under certain conditions, initiate modifications of the Constitution. It was called upon to regulate everything that had not been provided for by the Constitution, and which became necessary to its working. Finally, it had to consider the petitions addressed by the nation. It was this latter attribute which it exercised with the greatest authority; but this right of examination was merely perfunctory, and more than once the wise decisions of the higher Assembly on such petitions were condemned to everlasting sleep in the pigeon-holes of some Ministry.

To set the new governmental mechanism created by the Constitution of the 14th January in motion, it was necessary that the deputies should be elected and the Legislative Body be constituted. A decree of the 2nd February convoked the electoral colleges for the 29th of the same month.

Everywhere the intention prevailed to send to the Chamber men who would facilitate the march of the Government. One might have trusted to the spirit of goodwill that animated the electoral body, but the Prince made it a point of asserting the right of the public power to interfere in the electoral debates. It was decided to bring forward in every electoral circumscription a candidate officially designated and supported by the administration. The principle of official candidature was advanced in this way; and let us say here that for every legitimate Government, which invites, by no matter what title, the country to participate in the governmental mechanism, the official candidature becomes a right and a duty. Especially does it become so when universal suffrage figures among the con-

stitutional institutions of the State ; because under such a régime passion may too easily take the place of wisdom, and against those eventual perils the public power should not be refused the means of defence.

To what, in fact, does a legislative election amount. It is the challenge addressed to the country to pronounce upon the policy of the Government.

Under what form are those solemn experiments tried? What is their nature? What lesson may we expect, what consequences deduct from them?

At such times two camps are confronting each other.

On one side are those who completely approve all the acts of the Government. If the struggle becomes at all animated, their ranks are increased by the Conservatives of all shades, who, in the interest of a dynasty, make a sacrifice of the apprehensions aroused by the march of affairs.

On the other side are those who openly blame the policy of the Government, and who have invariably for auxiliaries the revolutionaries inimical to all legitimate power. In similar alliances the direction of the movement ever belongs to the most violent ; by virtue of this title the revolutionaries possess themselves of it, and in their efforts to depreciate the public power and the men that support it, they exhaust all lawful means ; they even transgress the limits traced by the latter, and shrink at nothing to insure the victory of their candidates. They are the assailants, and the violence of the attack is ever, in matters electoral, superior to the ardour of the defence. Concert and discipline are conditions of success ordinarily found among the opponents, rarely to be met with among those who support the powers that be when it is not the revolutionary power.

Left to themselves those two parties would not contest with equal arms. Hence the Government

has the right to intervene in the struggle; on condition, however, of exercising this right with moderation and dignity. Is not the Government, in those electoral contests, treated as an accused, and has not the accused the right to defend himself? When so many unjust attacks, calumnies, injuries are directed against the public power, against those who support it, should it stand by, an indifferent spectator of this great debate, in which its acts are discussed, and its honour and existence often brought into jeopardy. The duty of the Government is to enlighten public opinion, and to use its natural auxiliaries, its functionaries, its agents, to combat error and to propagate truth. Its functionaries and agents are by right supposed to be the partisans of its policy, seeing that they remain in its service; hence it is but logical to expect an unqualified co-operation from them. Besides, is not the French mind more inclined to criticism and to opposition than to healthy appreciation of the acts of the public power? and when a Government accords a people this immense right, called "universal suffrage," is it not but just that it should reserve to itself, as a counterweight, the nomination of candidates who command its preferences, and that it should use its natural means to favour their election?

A power issued from the revolution, and deriving its authority only from the latter, would attempt in vain to invoke the benefits of this official candidature; its origin interdicts its logical intervention, and the principles professed by the men of the revolution commands them to abstain from a practice they have never ceased to condemn.

The official candidature can only be the right of a Government that exists by virtue of a regular institution. In France, not to mention other countries, the Monarchy and the Empire can only invoke a similar origin. Each holds its power from the regular delegation of the nation.

Royalty is not based solely upon divine right. The chief of the dynasty owes his elevation to the throne also to an election, which, for all it had not the large foundations of our modern customs, constitutes nevertheless a regular right, to which has been added the consecration of centuries. His legitimacy is beyond dispute.

The legitimacy of the Empire is equally indisputable.

The *Senatus Consultus* of 1800, and that of 1804, which gave first the power, later on the crown, to Napoleon I., and founded the fourth French estate, are two immense and unfettered manifestations of the will of the nation.

Hence Empire and Royalty have had, during their existence, to protect a right and to defend the will of the nation. In receiving their investiture they expressly accepted the obligation to use all their efforts to the support of the monarchical edifice, and to apply all methods of Government calculated to defeat the machinations of the Revolution. The day that Monarchy assumed the representative form, when it submitted its actions, by the system of election, to the judgment of the country, that day the official candidature became an imperative obligation, a condition essential to its existence.

What, on the other hand, is the origin of the revolutionary Governments which during this century have imposed themselves upon the country? What are their rights? Where is their delegation? Their origin is the barricades; their right is their violent usurpation; as for the delegation of the country, they have taken care not to appeal to it. Hence those revolutionary Governments have neither rights nor delegation to defend, and the official candidature in their hands would only be a fresh usurpation to add to the first one. It is probably because of this, that in order to be logical—in words at least—the revolutionaries persist

in condemning official candidature, meanwhile reserving to themselves, when they are in power, its most violent usage for their benefit. Hence, to bring back the doctrine of which we have given the bases to the subject under discussion, we may affirm that for the Empire the official candidature was, as we insisted, a right and a duty. No doubt the intervention of Louis Napoleon's Government was not at all necessary in the legislative elections of the 25th February to secure its majority in the Assembly; but he committed an act of foresight by asserting his principles, and shielded himself beforehand, in the event of less prosperous days, from the accusation of having forged fresh arms to defend himself.

In those elections of 1852 the desire to second the Prince was so eager, that the candidates of the Government stood in no need whatsoever of administrative support. A mere nomination meant an election, and, apart from five or six colleges where local influences prevailed against the official candidature, the nominees of the Government obtained crushing majorities.

Previous to the meeting of the Legislative Body, a delicate question had to be settled, namely, the nomination of its President. There had been no hesitation with regard to the Senate. The ex-king, Jerome Napoleon, uncle to the Prince-President, had accepted this high mission, and no opposition candidate was put forward.

The nomination for presidency of the Legislative Body was to arouse a downright storm. M. de Morny, for all he had announced at the time of his withdrawal from the Ministry, his weariness of public affairs, and his resolve to keep away from them, cherished nevertheless an ardent desire to get back to power. He knew how to impose himself at certain times upon the President. He had succeeded, at the time of the 2nd December, in wresting his appointment to the Ministry of the



Interior from him; he succeeded a second time in betraying the Prince into a promise of the Presidency of the Chamber. But the hostile attitude of M. de Morny towards the whole of the Ministry would have caused his nomination to be considered a slight upon the Cabinet; hence it was arranged that all of us should insist upon the Prince reconsidering his first intentions. It was resolved, besides, to request Prince Jerome to add his remonstrances to ours. Prince Jerome used all his influence with his nephew; it was he who obtained that M. de Morny should not be President of the Chamber, and that the dignity should be conferred upon M. Billault.

The 29th March was the day fixed for the meeting of the Chambers; but before this date, and during the four months of Louis Napoleon's dictature, it would be difficult to say how many things had been done, the results that had been obtained, the complete transformation that had taken place in the state of the country, in her political, moral, and financial situation; the great and fruitful enterprises the State had inaugurated, the many useful reforms that had been decreed, the impulse that had been given to business, the flights industry and commerce had taken; to point out the vivifying breath of prosperity that blew from one end of France to the other. If the country had been prudent enough to prefer the benefits of stability, the prosperity the latter brings in its train, the wealth it distributes, to the trouble aroused by adventurous experiments and the ruin they lead to, assuredly France had a splendid horizon opening before her.

We will not try to make light of an objection we overheard now and then. "If the 2nd December," it has been said, "dragged the country from the horrors of anarchy, it has not been able to found a durable régime. Revolution lifted its head once more; it has resumed its march, it wields a

sovereign sway to-day; no, the 2nd December, considered from that point of view, has only been a fresh stoppage in the Revolution."

First of all, if it had been nothing more than this interim of twenty years in the costly and the pernicious occupation of the country by the Revolution, we should still have the right to say that the 2nd December has not been a benefit to be ignored, especially if we consider the terrible nature of the demagogic upheavals. But it would have been more than a stoppage, it would have been the final deliverance, if the promptings of patriotism, which awoke for an instant to aid the Government in its onward march, had not rapidly made place for party spirit. Instead of a sympathetic consideration, like that of the first hours, the new power failed not to find itself before long confronted by the reconstituted crusade of the ardent leaders of the former parties—the coalition. The coalition has never ceased, by every means in its power, to pursue its work of destruction, and on the ruins of the country it has been able to contemplate at leisure the fruits of its endeavours.

Our aim is not to justify what history will call "the mistakes of the Second Empire;" but if we had wished to undertake this task, it is not in this volume it could have been accomplished. Criticism would scarcely find its vantage-ground in this period of Louis-Napoleon's Government of which we have had to speak. In our next publication we shall find ourselves in presence of painful circumstances. All parties are led away by passions, as all Governments commit errors; we shall unhesitatingly disclose the truth. We may be permitted to say to-day that the men who counselled and succeeded in swaying the sovereign in the last years of his reign will have to give an account of the pernicious use they made of their influence. This Empire, of which the 2nd December had laid the foundations, could have lived, could have

become great, could have put a final stop to the Revolution. In the critical days the men did not rise to the level of their task. The burden had become too heavy for one only: it is from having ignored the warnings given to him; it is from having accorded unwholesome liberties to the country, instead of giving her serious constitutional guarantees; it is from having mistaken the real aspirations of the nation, that the splendid edifice of 1852 collapsed. If we were condemned to witness, as mournful lookers-on, the destruction of this grand work of the 2nd December, the foundering of our hopes, we shall not be debarred, at the proper time, from allotting to each his part of the responsibilities.

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

### THE EMPIRE.

Opening of the Chambers.—Reconstruction of the Cabinet.—Origin of M. de Persigny's Hostility.—The dangers of Sincerity.—Journey of the Prince-President.—The *Senatus Consultus* of the 7th November, 1852.—The *Plébiscite* of the 22nd November.—The Poll.—The Empire is restored.

ON the 29th March the Prince-President opened the first session of the Chambers, and thus put into operation the Constitution which was his work. In language full of dignity he reminded the country of the task he had just accomplished and the motives that had prompted him.

"The Dictature which the people confided to me ceases to-day," said Louis Napoleon. "Affairs will resume their regular course. It is with a feeling of deep satisfaction that I have come hither to proclaim the putting into operation of the Constitution; because my constant desire has been not only to restore order, but to make it durable

by endowing France with institutions appropriate to her wants. . . . Therefore when, thanks to some men of courage, thanks, above all, to the energetic attitude of the army, all perils were averted in a few hours, my first care was to ask the nation for instructions. Society has been too long like a pyramid turned upside down ; I replaced it on its base."

No happier comparison could have defined in so few words the transformation which had been accomplished ; hence deafening applause showed the Prince that his thoughts were shared by his listeners.

After the numerous creations that had marked the period of the Dictature, there remained few urgent legislative measures to propose to the Chamber. Their session was of short duration ; it was, nevertheless, sufficiently long to get successfully through some useful work. An important result sprang from this first intercourse between the great powers of the State—mutual confidence. If later on the Chambers showed too great a submission to the Crown, there was as yet nothing but a spontaneous and sympathetic co-operation testifying to a complete conformity of views and sentiments.

In a political situation that has assumed so tranquil an aspect once more, being in office, while far from a sinecure, was exempt from those incessant preoccupations amidst which the latter years had been passed. From certain points of view it had its attractions ; hence the ministerial portfolios were the object of numerous and eager solicitations.

Absolute Governments, or those that approach to it in their working, are not, any more than parliamentary Governments, free from personal competitions. The form of those contests may differ ; their aim is the same. To some the craving for power is the principal motive ; to others it is the

wish to strengthen their own position, by a junction with a sympathetic political group or party. Intrigue is too often the means depended on for success.

Which of these causes was it that determined as early as the 28th July the reconstruction of a Cabinet dating from the 22nd January only? We do not think it necessary to explain the point. The *Moniteur* published on the 28th July the following nominations:—

M. Drouyn de Lhuys was appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs, instead of the Marquis de Turgot, who retired.

M. Fould succeeded the Count de Casabianca at the Ministry of State.

M. Magne replaced M. Lefèvre-Duruflé at the Ministry of Public Works and Commerce. The three retiring ministers were called to the Senate.

At the time of these ministerial modifications being discussed, I had noticed the cause of the growing hostility of M. de Persigny towards me. He had used all his influence to get me appointed Minister of State, and tried all his persuasion to induce me to accept this post. He showed me the honour of being placed, hierarchically, the first among the Ministers. Such was, in fact, the rank conferred upon the Minister of State, to compensate as it were, by a fictitious honour, for the absence of all real importance. However difficult the mission I performed at the Ministry of General Police, however perilous the efforts I made to make this mission profitable to the Government and the Prince, I preferred political importance with its dangers, to a high sinecure with the sweets of repose and security. I remained at my post, therefore, and it is from that day that my colleague of the Interior, who no doubt contemplated, in the event of my accepting the Ministry of State, the amalgamation of the functions of the Ministry of Police with his own—it is from that day that M. de



Persigny, seeing the fruitlessness of his efforts with me, opened a relentless campaign against me. In order to accomplish my overthrow, he allied himself with my enemies, whose number my functions increased day by day. The Prince's sentiments towards me rendered eviction, pure and simple, difficult. It was arranged that the campaign should be conducted on the grounds of the necessity to suppress the Ministry of General Police, if only as a guarantee to the country that absolute tranquillity reigned once more. Operations were begun; and my recollection does not revert without certain pride to this obstinate crusade against me. It had at its head all the high caballers of the political world. I had more than once divulged their machinations, and I had already frequently experienced the effects of their anger. Fortunately there remains to honourable people always this great consolation, namely, to find public opinion severely condemn such adversaries and detractors. I had ample proofs of this consolation given to me.

But those slight political agitations were only confined to a limited circle; the country ignored their causes, and attached no importance to them. The nation was fully given up to the enjoyment of the renewed and signal prosperity, which increased day by day. There remained, however, one vague preoccupation; the chief power had as yet but a limited duration of office; the word "Republic," though nothing but the word remained, worried her peace, and detracted from her complete satisfaction. On every occasion the people manifested an obstinate desire to go back to the Empire. An opportunity was offered to the Prince to judge for himself of this ardent wish of the nation to consolidate on his head the power she had already twice accorded to him. From all parts of France addresses poured in, soliciting a visit from the Chief of the State. The principal towns sent deputations to the Elysée to emphasize their requests. The

Prince resolved to comply with those wishes, and to undertake a long journey, which would enable him to visit those towns where he had not as yet been. Bourges, Moulins, Lyons, Marseilles, Nîmes, Toulouse, Bordeaux, were to be the principal stages.

The 14th September, 1852, the Prince left Paris. He wished to have two of his Ministers constantly with him. General de Saint-Arnaud and I accompanied him at the beginning of the journey. Bourges was the first town where the Prince found himself in presence both of considerable military forces and of a great concourse of the population. However convinced every part of France was of the cordial reception awaiting the Chief of the State, there was, nevertheless, a real impatience to see under what form this manifestation of public feeling would show itself. From that point of view, and above all as a signal to the other departments through which the Prince was to pass, the events at Bourges would assume a decisive importance. In their "*Histoire Populaire de l'Empereur Napoléon III.*" MM. de Cassagnac give on this subject an interesting account of an incident said to have occurred between M. de Persigny, Minister of the Interior, and M. Pastoureau, Prefect of the Department of the Cher. The latter, summoned by his chief, is said to have received from him, unknown to the Prince, the necessary instructions for the Chief of the State being welcomed by the people with the cries of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" The impulse being given in this way, the masses would no doubt join in the manifestation. This anecdote has been borrowed by MM. de Cassagnac from the unpublished memoirs of M. de Persigny. We should add that the solicitude of the Minister of the Interior was superfluous, because no one doubted that the Prince would be hailed everywhere with, as it were, an explosion of sympathy for the restoration of the Empire.

The civil element played assuredly the most

important rôle in the reception of Louis Napoleon, but his welcome by the army was equally of interest. The sentiments of the latter were well known. It wanted the Empire; it wanted it, if that could be possible, even still more than the people, but it had not, like the people, its entire liberty of manifestation. Discipline has its exactions, and the thing was to strike the exact balance between the dictates of duty and the eagerness to share in the general movement. What, therefore, were the troops likely to do? What would be their attitude at the moment of the march past? That was the question which the very chiefs most ardent for the restoration of the Empire asked themselves; not from hesitation, but in their estimate of what was permissible while on duty. They were the more perplexed that the example was to come from them. The cry from their lips would certainly be repeated by their men. Should they give the impulse to the general wish by crying "Vive l'Empereur!" or should they try to calm the general ardour by crying only "Vive le Président!" or "Vive Napoléon!" That was the question the superior officers of the small army to be reviewed by the Chief of the State asked themselves. The general of division, the Duke de Mortemart, who was to have its command, was, by his family traditions, also by his personal preferences, perhaps, attached to the cause of the Bourbons; he could not prevail on himself to assume an attitude at variance with his past. His mind was made up. He would preserve silence when, passing at the head of his troops before the Prince, he had to make the customary salute. An incident provided the means to counteract the reserve to which the Duke de Mortemart felt himself bound.

The general commanding the sub-division of Bourges, Viscount de Noue, was one of my friends. This question of the form under which Louis

Napoleon was to be acclaimed had seriously pre-occupied him. General de Mortemart would have to pass the first before the Prince, and to take up his station opposite the latter. General de Noue would follow immediately after the Duke de Mortemart, at the head of all the troops. He expected that his chief would keep silent. But was his liberty engaged by this, or might he give free vent to his personal inspirations? In a confidential interview General de Noue consulted me on the subject. I, for my part, saw no obstacle to his acting according to his sentiments, and seeing that he considered it a duty to cry "*Vive l'Empereur!*" I deemed that in doing so he did not deviate from his duty at such a moment, nor from the respect due to a chief who abstained from pronouncing himself. I frankly told him my opinion.\*

At the review General de Mortemart, when he passed before the Prince, saluted silently and took up his station facing him. At a distance of about fifty yards behind the Duke came General de Noue. Gracefully wheeling the magnificent Arab he bestrode round to the troops, he cried "*Vive l'Empereur!*" but the cheers of the soldiers had already drowned his voice, and from a hundred thousand lungs at once came this self-same cry of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" Each squadron, each battalion, repeats it in turn; and equally the dense masses of the people take up the acclama-

\* Like his chief, General de Noue belonged to the Legitimist party. Still he was attached to it by birth and family relations rather than from personal convictions. The young general had been away in Africa; hence he had remained a stranger to the events that agitated his country. In his interview with me, he summed up his opinion in two words. "I understand nothing of politics," he said, "I perceive only one thing in what is going on—that the Republic leads France to her ruin. The Legitimate Monarchy has my sympathies and my preference, but it is incompatible with the actual state of the public mind. The Empire only is possible; it is the only régime that can save us from anarchy, and it is because of this that I do not hesitate to wish for the Empire."

tion which faithfully interprets their hopes, and their desire to have done with the provisional régime.

After the troops, the people wish to organise a march-past before Napoleon. It is no longer enthusiasm, it becomes delirium. In this manifestation the great and the small are confounded; it is the whole of France, who by this passionate delegation summon the Chief of the State to give her back without delay, definite institutions—the Imperial Monarchy.

If M. de Persigny had witnessed this triumphal ovation at Bourges, he would have dispensed with his counsels to the prefect. The people had not waited for the municipalities to give the signal. The moment they perceived the Prince in the distance they had saluted him with frenzied cries of “Vive l'Empereur!” Never was there a more spontaneous manifestation, more ardent in its expression than that of Bourges, and let it be said at once of the whole of France also, as manifested in those counties through which the Prince passed in the course of his journey of 1852.

If in Louis Napoleon's nature there existed one faculty that swayed all the others, it was assuredly the gift of unmistakably gauging the aspirations of the people. He, as it were, felt within himself the vibration of the national chord; he showed it once more in this instance.

The question of the Prince's journey had been discussed at various times in our ministerial councils. It was necessary to make certain arrangements in view of this grand event, and the Prince willingly shared the debates they provoked. But if any of us alluded to the taking of measures to favour the manifestation of public feeling, the Prince's countenance became overcast (it was his ordinary way of showing his displeasure) and he cut short all deliberation. One day he went farther still, and to a proposal of M. de Persigny,



to do what he did do after all with the prefect of the Department of Cher, the Prince answered with some show of temper :—

“I will not have the country guided. I want her to be left absolutely free to express her feelings as she likes. I wish to know the real truth through my own eyes and my own ears, and to prove in this way the truth of what is written to me every day from all parts of France. My journey is an interrogatory. I will not have the answer to it prepared; I mean to have it in all its spontaneity, and on it I shall shape my conduct for the future.”

Bourges had given the answer; it was startling and peremptory. Nevers was what Bourges had been, and Moulins was what Nevers had been. The departments had gone out to meet the Chief of the State. Entire communes camped round the town; all fatigue was gaily supported. They wanted to see the saviour of the country, to express their gratitude to him by their acclamations, and above all to give him to understand the wish of the country to see the Empire restored.

At Roanne, at St. Etienne, at Lyons, the same concourse of populations, the same enthusiasm, the same frenzied cries of “Vive l'Empereur!”

At Lyons, the Prince-President inaugurated the equestrian statue of Napoleon I. In the speech he made on that occasion, he showed that he understood the sense and the drift of the manifestations he had met with on his journey. He said :—

“We have scarcely emerged from those moments of trouble during which all sense of good and evil were confounded, the most vigorous minds perverted. Prudence and patriotism require that in such moments the nation should recover from her excitement before fixing her destinies, and as yet it is difficult for me to know under which name I may be able to render the greatest services. If

the modest title of President could facilitate the mission confided to me, and from which I have not shrunk, I for one should not wish to change this title for that of Emperor from motives of personal interest."

The more the Prince seemed to hesitate to accept the crown, the greater grew the ardour of the people in asking him to have done with the Republic. At Grenoble, Valence, Avignon, Aix, and Marseilles, there was an increased renewal of the cries of "*Vive l'Empereur!*"

At Marseilles, in laying the first stone of the cathedral, Louis Napoleon spoke to the clergy and the Catholics of France. He unreservedly opened his heart when he said, "Whenever I can I shall strive to sustain and propagate the ideas of religion, the most sublime of all, seeing that they are a guide in prosperity and a consolation in misfortune. My Government, I say it with pride, is perhaps the only one that has supported religion for itself; it supports it not as a political instrument, not to please a party, but solely from conviction, and from the love of the good it inspires, as of the truth it teaches.

Toulon, Nîmes, Montpellier, Carcassonne, Toulouse, Agen, received in their turn the visit of the Prince, and vied with each other in expressing their gratitude and their hopes in him. Hesitation was no longer permissible, and the people had to a certain extent the right to know how their aspirations would be received. The rôles had changed: it was no longer Louis Napoleon who sought to know, it was the people who put the question. The cries of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" were, at the beginning of the journey, a kind of edging on to the Empire; they became an interrogation at the end. The Prince understood this, and at Bordeaux, at the banquet of the Chamber of Commerce, he allowed to pierce through, even more clearly than at Lyons, the impressions he brought

back from his journey. That day the Empire was resolved upon. One might easily gather the fact from the words of the Prince, when he said:—

“The purpose of my journey, as you know, was to see for myself our beautiful provinces of the South, to judge of their wants. It has, however, given rise to a result much more important.

“In fact, I say it with a candour as far removed from pride as from false modesty, never has a nation testified in a manner more direct, more spontaneous, more unanimous her will to be emancipated from the preoccupations for the future by consolidating in the self-same hand a power sympathetic to her.

“It is because she knows at this hour the deceptive hopes with which she was lulled to sleep, and the dangers that threatened her. She knows that in 1852 society was going headlong to ruin, because each party consoled itself beforehand for the wreck with the hope of planting its standard on the spars that might remain afloat. She is thankful to me for having saved the ship by only flying the colours of France.

“Disabused of absurd theories, the people have become convinced that those pretended reformers were nothing but dreamers, because there always was inconsistency and disproportion between their means and the results promised.

“To-day France surrounds me with her sympathies, because I do not belong to the family of idealists. To accomplish the welfare of the country, there is no need to apply new systems, but to give above all confidence in the present, security for the future. That is why France seems to wish to come back to the Empire.”

From Bordeaux to Paris, there was a continual ratification of the speech in the former town. Angoulême, Rochefort, La Rochelle, Niort, Poi-

tiers, Tours, saluted the Empire as an accomplished fact; and, indeed, events did not fail before long to transform those unanimous hopes into reality. The wish to restore the Empire had been so universally manifested during the journey of the Prince-President, that resistance to the wishes of the country could not be prolonged. It was not Louis Napoleon who overthrew the Republic; the latter collapsed amidst general reprobation. In ceasing to impose upon the nation this form of government, which still left some causes for anxiety, the Prince performed a duty from which it became impossible for him to withdraw.

On the 19th October the Senate was convoked to examine the important question of restoring the Imperial Monarchy; and the 7th November it voted a *Senatus Consultus*. The essential provisions were as follows:—

“The Imperial dignity is restored.

“Louis Napoleon Bonaparte is Emperor of the French, under the name of Napoleon III.

“The Imperial dignity is hereditary in the direct and lawful male descendants of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte in order of primogeniture, and to the perpetual exclusion of the females and their descendants.

“The following proposal shall be submitted to the French people in the form determined by the Decrees of the 2nd and 4th December, 1851: ‘The French people wish the restoration of the Imperial dignity in the person of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, with the hereditary rights in his direct descendants, legitimate or adoptive, and confer upon him the right of regulating the order of succession to the throne in the Bonaparte family in the manner provided for in the *Senatus Consultus* of the 7th November, 1852.’”

The people were convoked in their constituencies for the 21st and 22nd November, to accept

or reject the plebiscitary project passed by the Senate, and the Legislative Body was convened for the 25th of November, for the purpose of revising, counting, and declaring the result of the votes.

As in 1848, as on the 21st February, 1851, violent enthusiasm brought almost the whole of the nation to the poll, which gave the subjoined results:—

For the restoration of the Empire	. . .	7,824,189
Against	. . . . .	253,145

Hence the Republic had lawfully ceased to exist. The Empire rose radiantly on its abandoned ruins. This self-same generation, this self-same people who, led on by unwholesome excitations, had overtoppled a throne in 1848, in the name of liberty, confessed their mistake. After having bitterly expiated their passions and errors, they were still more unanimous to build up again than they had been to destroy. And, as if to give a startling proof of the want of logic of those revolutionary adventures, which for almost a century had periodically desolated France, this same people this time immolated their idol of yesterday. For some time, at least, they joyfully loaded liberty with chains.

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

### CONCLUSION: A GLANCE AT THE 2ND DECEMBER.

What feelings has the 2nd December evoked in the Nation?—Who has approved, who has condemned it?—Who approves, who condemns it to-day?—How will History judge?—What the Revolutionaries did in July, 1830, in February, 1848, in September, 1870, and the 18th March, 1871.—Their motives.—The origin of their power.—Contrast with the 2nd December.—Summing up.

IN our Preface we took care to warn the reader that, though writing the history of Louis Napoleon's presidency, our principal object was to describe



the 2nd December. The latter, in fact, sways the whole of this period of our contemporary history, and in virtue of this it may not be uninteresting to sum up in a few words the impression it is likely to produce.

We have shown the concatenation of circumstances that fatally led to the 2nd December; we have said what were its consequences, the transformations it brought to the constitutional régime of France; let us endeavour to examine here, without partiality, the sentiments with which the nation received it. We will at the same time try to find out the appreciation that prevails to-day with regard to this grand episode. Finally, we will endeavour to forecast the judgment of history, to determine the place that will be allotted to it in this series of grand events, which, since the beginning of the century, have so frequently changed the form of government.

And first of all, what was its reception?

To judge it soberly we must go back to a few days after the struggle, namely after the accomplished events, when the country, freed from the anxiety the revolt had produced, could pronounce herself unreservedly. At that moment the reception accorded to the 2nd December may be summed up in one word. It was an immense ovation.

In France, since agitation and revolutions have periodically endangered every interest, there has sprung up, independent of all ardent political preferences, a considerable group, uniting, from the most humble to the most opulent, all those who own something or are in the way of doing so. This group aspires first of all to tranquillity; it wishes before everything for peace and order. It has given to itself the name which best translates its instincts: it calls itself the Conservative party. In consequence of the parcelling out of the soil, this group by itself makes up numerically more than half of the country.

We may say that the Conservative party unanimously applauded the success of Louis Napoleon.

The Napoleonic legend still existed in all its vigour; it still had its fanatics, and their vociferous joy mingled with the plaudits of the Conservative party. Some beheld the return at last of lost security; others hailed the return of a dynasty still popular, notwithstanding its misfortunes. It was from this imposing whole that the ovation came, and it was the more startling that the vanquished party silently submitted to its defeat.

What is the appreciation that prevails to-day on the 2nd December?

It is not surprising that resentment should still gnaw the heart of many who suffered from it; it is but the law of nature. If loftiness of mind enables its possessors now and then to escape the indulgence of vulgar rancour, it is not among the ranks of demagoguery that such praiseworthy exceptions can be looked for. But all sensible people, all moderate men, even a great number of the vanquished of that period—in one word, the masses of the country—do not they consider to-day that the 2nd December was a patriotic enterprise, that it was a day of deliverance, and that eighteen years of prosperity, which were its consequence, will supply the history of the century with one of its most memorable pages?

In vain would they tell us that the majority accorded in our days to the Republicans is the proof of the condemnation of the 2nd December.

Such language would be a grave error, and would show ignorance of the inmost feelings of the country. It would be well, with a view to the future, to weigh the justice of such a verdict.

That which constitutes the Republican majority to-day are not the Republicans, properly speaking. That opinion, from the point of view of doctrine, has but few partisans. The Republican majority

is composed of elements the most dissimilar. It counts first, by prescriptive right, the revolutionaries by profession, the needy place-seekers, those who have lost caste, the envious; these are its militant nucleus.

Secondly, it contains the peaceable and by no means numerous group of believers in the Republican form of government, the doctrinaires of democracy; all those assuredly protest against what with a shudder of horror they call "the crime of the 2nd December." But that which constitutes the numbers in the Republican majority, and which consequently provides its force, is a fraction of the Conservative party, unfortunately very important, which, from an ill-considered idea of tranquillity, prefers to live in a state of discomfort which is not altogether ruin, rather than seek deliverance in an energetic vindication which it knows to be fraught with some temporary risks. The powers that be, such is to those misguided Conservatives the Government that must be supported. They do not like it, but they suffer it; they resign themselves, and translate this resignation by an electoral co-operation whence issue the Republican and revolutionary majorities of our Assemblies.

Let it not be said to us that those adherents from fear, those Republicans for the nonce, profess hatred or repulsion to the 2nd December. No, they regret in silence, some the Monarchy, others the Empire, and would hail a return of the past that commanded their preferences, if they awoke one morning under the Monarchy restored or the Empire re-established.

When the 2nd December is mentioned to them, they answer with a sigh of envy; they sigh because there is not another accomplished fact of the kind to be applauded.

We are indisputably right in saying to-day, more than thirty years after the 2nd December, that the healthy part of the nation still applauds this grand

act and the benefits it produced. It only forestalls history by so doing.

History, in fact, will restore its real character to this grand event; it will take into consideration the conditions of the country, the dangers that threatened her, the conspiracies against the power and the life of the Prince; it will appreciate the aim he set himself, it will applaud the success that crowned his work; it will solemnly record, to hand them down to future generations, those immense and successive acclamations of an entire nation, who, in her full liberty, in her all-power to constitute, disposed of her own destinies, and restored the power to the dynasty founded by her suffrages at the beginning of the century. It is not history which will write down in its pages this word which our enemies would fain render ignominious, but which only translates their hatred and rancour, "the crime of December," for such is its customary appellation with every good Republican.

Let us condescend for a moment to compare our acts with theirs, and ask the leaders of the Revolution why people should not rather say, the crime of 1830, the crime of 1848, the crime of 1870. Let us make this comparison as complete as possible; let us look at their motives, let us look at their acts, let us look at their causes; let us finally look at the guarantees they give to the country when the deed has been done, and then say what we were and did from all those points of view.

Well then, on the 29th July, 1830, those heroes of July, as they style themselves, overthrew a throne, exiled a dynasty, which for centuries had contributed to the grandeur of France; which for the last fifteen years had given order, security, and a liberty which all honest people judged amply sufficient for the temper of the country; they drove out a king who but yesterday shed glory on our arms by giving us, through the taking of Algiers,

a new kingdom, as it were. They threw Paris into the horrors of civil strife, our streets reeked with blood; they murdered brave soldiers to punish them for their fidelity; and when they had exhausted their orgies they dub with the name of "glorious" those mournful days which are nothing but a detestable stage in our revolutionary sufferings. And when once more in 1848 the same men, the majority of whom had made themselves the chiefs and promoters of the revolt in 1830—when once more they overthrew the royalty they this time had set up themselves, when they harangue a valiant army into forsaking its duty—when, as in 1830, they turned Paris upside down, causing it to bristle with barricades, showering shell and shot upon it—when they did all this, did they perform a signal act of patriotism? Was France likely to find glory, fortune, prosperity, liberty, in their usurpation of power? No; they destroyed for the love of destruction and for the sake of spoil. They tore down a constitutional fabric which for eighteen years had contributed to the regular development of liberal institutions. They swept away order and security, and put into their stead disorder and anarchy. Those days of 1848 are "glorious" also according to them.

And the farther we advance the more the Revolution piles up the ruins.

If to the Empire the 4th September is a day of bitter mourning, it is to the Republicans a disgrace that can never be wiped out. This liberty of which they constantly usurp the banner, had not the Empire just given it a large place in its new institutions? And yet, in presence of the enemy, they did not hesitate to add the horrors of a revolution to the anguish of our defeats. The last efforts at resistance of our unfortunate country were paralyzed in this way; peace was refused, and in prolonging a senseless defence they succeeded in trebling our ransom.



The revolutionaries of 1870 were to inflict a still more terrible and final calamity upon this France, already so exhausted. Impotent to hold the power of which they had possessed themselves, they allowed to grow in the shadow of their weakness the horrible debauch called the Commune, and by their criminal want of foresight Paris was given over to the most dreadful Vandalism. Our monuments were burned down, our walls destroyed, our treasuries pillaged, our prelates, magistrates, and generals assassinated. The blood flowed in torrents. Are they also "glorious," those days of the 4th September, 1870, and the 18th March, 1871.

But to resume. We have told the causes that produced the 2nd December, the necessities and the mission to which Louis Napoleon yielded. If we addressed a similar question to the revolutionaries, how could they answer it?

Who incited them to revolt in 1830, 1848, or 1870? In the name of which fraction of the country were her laws and constitutions broken?

In 1830, a few deputies, a few ambitious journalists, a few philosophers, who were but the mere plagiarists of their forerunners, provoked the movement; they unlocked the flood of hatred against the clergy and nobility, a reminiscence of 1793 over again. Nevertheless the people remained deaf to their seductions; they lived happily enough under the protection of institutions, the application of which went the even tenor of its way, without more jolting than is generally experienced by a new régime. When the revolutionaries startled Paris with the discharge of their muskets, they were the echo neither of a popular desire nor of a general wish; they arrogated to themselves the position both of the givers and receivers of an imaginary mandate.

In 1848, what causes, what reasons did there exist for a revolution? Was there, at any rate, to

serve as a pretext, a serious current of opinion? No, only some agitators by profession created an artificial ferment. A few deputies stumped the provinces, harangued the faithful, and gave them the password. It is to the cry of "*Vive la Réforme!*" that arms were taken up and the country set in commotion. But the country was not with the agitators; she suffered them, and watched from the first hour of their sway for the means to throw off their yoke. Again, who in 1870 asked for the overthrow of the Empire? What sentiments other than those of ambition and hatred guided the revolutionaries on that mournful day?

On the other hand, let us look at the grand spectacle of the 2nd December. It is an immense current from the nation herself that pushes the Prince to have done with the bastard institutions decked out with the name of Republican Constitution, which guaranteed neither security for the present nor stability for the future. It is more than two millions of Frenchmen who, through the lawful mode of petition, make known their aspirations; it is, in fact, a considerable number of the municipal councils, councils-general; in one word, the whole of the country, who within permissible limits summon the Prince to act.

Let no one try, therefore, to institute comparisons: 1830, 1848, 1870, are revolutions with the aim of spoliation; 1851 is deliverance, with the ardent co-operation of the nation.

Still, let us endeavour to show the contrast between the assumption of power by the revolution, and the use the Prince makes of his victory and his strength on the morrow of the 2nd December.

In 1830, 1848, 1870, what did the revolutionaries of all ranks do to at least attempt the consecration of their usurpation? Did they consult the country? Did they ask her to ratify their victory, whether she wished to give them her confidence? They were

very careful not to expose themselves to such a proof, whatever the power they may have expected from it. No, they declared themselves the sovereign masters, in order to shield the power more thoroughly from all attempt at being claimed by others.

In 1830, the Republicans, the real victors of the July days, struck with the discredit they meet with on the very morrow of their triumph, renounce the proclaiming of the Republic, and improvise a royalty on which they impose, at the beginning, their guardianship. Why, then, this confiscation of the constituent power? Why deliberate and enact among a few, instead of acting in the open day, instead of consulting the people whose sovereignty is being incessantly proclaimed? Why treat as suspect this people in whose name they pretended to act? We have said it. They feared the people's answer.

And in 1848! When those same Republicans of 1830, evicted from the grandeur they had dreamt of, overthrow the throne they had set up, and proclaim this time the Republic as the form of government claimed by the nation, why do they barricade themselves at the Hôtel de Ville, why do they arrogate themselves, to the number of ten or twelve, the constituent power? It is because they feel once more that the Revolution of 1848 is scouted by the country, and that the nation, if she had been consulted, would with an immense majority have condemned this impudent purloining of the public power. Instead of asking the country to elect an Assembly, which after all is but an indirect and far from conclusive method of consulting the country, why did not they put the question to the country with regard to the form of government?

Perhaps it would be said to-day that at the dates of 1830 and 1848 the process of consulting the "sovereignty of the nation" was not in the

habits of France. But had not the first Empire given the example of it? Had not, in 1800 and 1804, Napoleon addressed himself direct to the nation, and was it not to her that he owed the Consulate first, the Imperial dignity afterwards?

But could the same excuse be invoked in 1870? Had not the plébiscite become an institution of the country as it were? Had not in 1851, in 1852, in 1870, the Chief of the State directly appealed to the country, charging her to pronounce on her destinies? Why, when this national sovereignty was taken as the deceptive signboard, why refuse it all intervention in the creating of a new régime? Why, like in 1830 and in 1848, be shut up in this same Hôtel de Ville, to proclaim, though a minority of an Assembly without constituent power, the deposition of a dynasty arising from eight millions of suffrages? Who gave this minority without a power the power to proclaim the Republic? And why, if it did think for one moment that such was the preference of the country, why did not this minority call upon the country to ratify the Republic by her suffrages? There is still but one and the self-same answer: it was but too well known that the country dreaded the Republic as a terrible calamity; it was well known that, notwithstanding the reverses of the war, the people would still have manifested their will to preserve the Empire; and once more was unrolled before our eyes this melancholy spectacle of a few revolutionaries, of a few parvenus without authority, imposing upon France the Government of their fancy, and the fancy of their autocracy.

Therefore be it said once for all that neither in 1830, nor in 1848, nor in 1870, the revolutionaries, when they had the power in their hands, dared to consult the nation directly and expressly with regard to the ratifying of their usurpations.

What, on the contrary, did we do on the morrow of the 2nd December.

It is in the name of the country that the Prince had acted. It is the country whom he took to be his judge, and on the 21st December the whole of France, gathered in her constituencies, hailed her deliverer with seven millions and a half of suffrages. All assertions to the contrary, France associated herself fully and actively with the *Coup d'État* by voting thus; she bestowed upon it its legitimacy. Let us sum up the causes of the 2nd December, and to maintain once more this series of irrefutable truths.

In 1851, alarm prevails everywhere, the country is in distress. Paris is threatened with revolt, the provinces with the Jacquerie; a conspiracy aims at both the power and the liberty of the Chief of the State. On the refusal of the Assembly to open a legal issue to the complications of the future, France, taking revision for her banner, summons the Prince to make an end of those complications. The Prince obeys, and on the 2nd December he restores to the country the care of her own destinies. The country, with one unanimous impulse, acclaims her saviour, and on the remains of a legal system that led her to ruin, she founds a new legal system: the Constitution of 1852.

This is what history will say.

THE END.





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